Palestine exploration quarterly

QUARTERLY STATEMENT, NEW SERIES, No. 1.]

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PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND.

PREFACE.

THE new series of the Society's *Quarterly Statements* begins with an account of Mr. Palmer's journey of exploration in that little-visited region known as the Desert of the Tíh. The great addition made to geographical knowledge by this journey may be ascertained by comparing the map appended to this number with any of those previously in existence of the same region, and by reading the paper appended to Mr. Palmer's account, which is extracted from *Quarterly Statement*, First Series, No. IV.

The main feature of the past year's work at home has been the publication of the book entitled the "Recovery of Jerusalem." This contains, besides Captain Warren's work in the city, an account of the work done by Captain Wilson and Lieutenant Anderson in 1866, and other papers connected with the Society's past work.

In Palestine itself the most prominent incident of the work done was the discovery of the Moabite Stone, and this will always make the year 1870 an *annus mirabilis* in the history of Palestine Exploration. Although the actual discovery of the stone does not belong to Captain Warren, the share he had in the recovery of the remaining portions after its destruction was—as will be seen from the only exact accounts of its discovery, those published in *Quarterly Statements* Nos. V. and VI., and in the "Recovery of Jerusalem"—so important as to warrant the association of his name with that of Mr. Klein and M. Clermont-Ganneau.

Of geographical work, we have, besides Mr. Palmer's adventurous journey already referred to, Captain Warren's account of the Lebanon, Cœle-Syria, Hermon, and Saida; his visit to the Dead Sea; his expedition east of Jordan, and his determination of heights, names, and positions of places, in that part of the country.

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In the published proceedings of the Society for the last year, too, will be found Captain Wilson's ingenious identification of the site of Ai.

Among the gains to archæological knowledge, besides the important facts discovered in the shafts at Jerusalem, may be mentioned Captain Warren's careful sketches and plans of the ruined temples of Cœle-Syria. Two of them have been engraved in illustration of the essay by Mr. Phené Spiers in the "Recovery of Jerusalem." We have also M. Clermont-Ganneau's paper on the Stone of Zoheleth; and Dr. Sandreczki's happy suggestion, afterwards verified by M. Guerin, that in the rock tombs of El Medyeh would be found the Maccabæan mausoleum. It is only fair to add to the above the archæological paper furnished by the Rev. Greville Chester to the "Recovery of Jerusalem."

Steps have been taken, during the past autumn, to set on foot an independent American Association, in alliance with our own, with precisely similar objects—viz., the scientific examination of the Holy Land. The Committee have to record their thanks to the Rev. Henry Allon and the Rev. Dr. Mullens for their services in acting as the medium of communication between our Association and those interested in our work in America during their late visit to New York. It was at first proposed that the new Association should take the form of a branch, but on further consideration our American friends decided on forming a separate Society. The communications between the two bodies have been conducted in the most friendly spirit, and the remarkable interest always shown by the Americans in this work, leads to the hope that excellent results will follow the foundation of their Society. It is hoped that the joint action of the two Committees will be laid before subscribers in the next *Quarterly*. The delay which the receipt of this important intelligence has naturally caused in the plans of the Committee is less to be regretted as the circumstances of the time have not of late been favourable for soliciting donations.

The following is the list of the American Committee, as at present received:—Rev. Dr. Joseph Thompson, Chairman; Revs. Dr. Washburn, Durbiss, S. Hitchcock, H. B. Smith, Budington, J. Cotten Smith, and Thompson; Professors Kendrick, Hockett, Ed. Park Day; Rev. J. Stuart Dodge; Messrs. James Stokes and Van Lennep, and, Secretary *pro tem.*, Rev. Dr. Crosbie.

Meantime, the stores, &c., at Jerusalem are under the charge of Dr. Chaplin. Captain Warren, to the great regret of the Committee, has found himself unable to return to Palestine, and has rejoined his corps. He has been occupied during the last six months in completing his work for the Committee, a considerable part of which has yet to be published.

The collection of relics, &c., brought from Jerusalem has found a temporary home in the South Kensington Museum, where it is placed in a room at the end of the Meyrick Armour Gallery.

The delay in bringing out this number of the *Quarterly* has been caused by the fact that the time taken in drawing and lithographing the accompanying map, with the numerous corrections involved in so important a piece of work, has proved longer by many weeks than was originally contemplated.

THE DESERT OF THE TÍH AND THE COUNTRY OF MOAB.

St. John's College, Cambridge,
December, 1870.

In November, 1869, having but recently returned from Sinai, the Palestine Exploration Fund did me the honour to send me out once again to the East for the purpose of exploring the large tract of desert country known by the suggestive name of Bádiet et Tîh, or "The Wilderness of the Wanderings," whither I had the good fortune to be accompanied by Mr. C. F. Tyrwhitt Drake, a gentleman who, in addition to a thorough practical knowledge of natural history, has been for years engaged in Eastern travel. I now beg to lay before you a statement of the results of that expedition:—

On the evening of the 16th December, 1869, we encamped at 'Aiyún Músá, and on the following morning commenced our journey.

We set off from Suez on foot; and as we expected to meet with difficulties from the Arabs amongst whom we were going, we took neither dragoman nor servants, and reduced our baggage to the smallest possible amount.

Our only escort consisted of the owners of the camels which carried our camp furniture and provisions, and these being changed from time to time as we passed from one tribe to another, we may be said to have performed our journey absolutely unattended and alone.

Our equipment consisted of the following articles:—

A tent 12ft. square, which, on leaving Jerusalem, was changed for one 6ft. by 5ft. and 5ft. in height. Two mattresses and blankets.

Kettle, pot, frying-pan, tin plates, knives, forks, and tin washing basins.

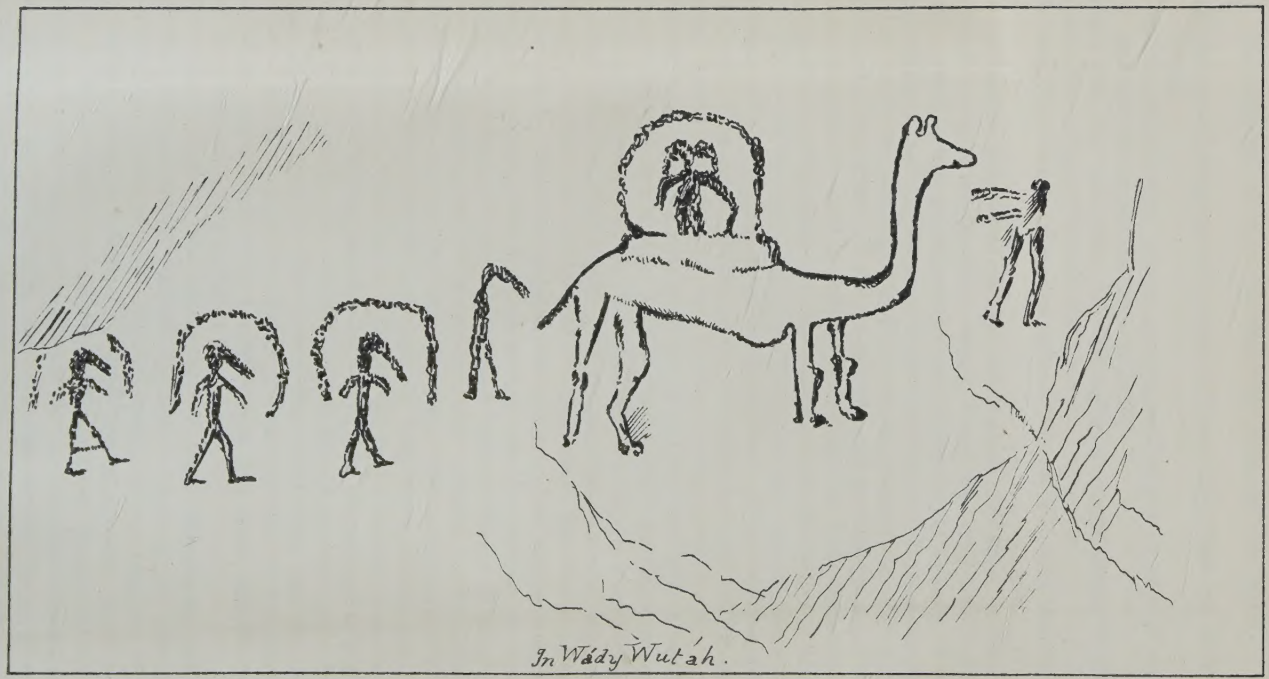
Tobacco, flour, bacon, onions, tea, sugar, Liebig's extract of meat, and brandy (supply for three months).

These, with our surveying and photographic instruments, clothes, &c., were carried upon four camels.

The first day's start is always a difficult one, as the loads have to be arranged and the geography of the store box has to be learned. It was therefore rather late when we got the camels off, after which we adjourned to one of the gardens, where Yusuf, the proprietor, entertained us with coffee and radishes; and, taking a final farewell of him and civilisation, we fairly started off into the desert. The day was very hot, but bright and pleasant. In Wády Merází we saw a heap of stones which marked the grave of one of the unfortunate Hajj pilgrims who are so often placed in quarantine near this spot on their return home from Mecca *viâ* Jeda and Tor. As we came through Wady el Ahtha we found that the soil at a particular spot had been recently turned up, disclosing a fine soft clay beneath the surface. This clay contains a great deal of salt, to obtain which it had been dug up by some passing Arabs.

Striking down towards the seacoast we came to Bir Abu Suweira, a little pool of very fair water. The road here and down Wády Amárah lies over a most unvaried, flat, and uninteresting desert. Near the well were some Terabín Arabs' tents, and we met a party of the men there who had gone for water. There is no other water but this in or near Wády 'Amárah. This is an important point, as the supposition that water did exist there, taken in conjunction with the sound of the name, has led some persons to identify this spot with the Marah of Scripture. The country immediately around the well consists of low hills of mounds covered with scanty desert herbage. Our camp was in Wády Makwan Hamádheh, which, as the camels went by a shorter path, we did not make till past sunset. All day we had a strong wind and a most unpleasant, blinding sandstorm. As we had determined to explore Wády Wutáh, and the pass was said to be a difficult one, we allowed our sheikh Hassan to go on with four of the camels and wait for us at Serábit el Khádem, while we ourselves took only the dromedary and one camel lightly laden with provisions for four days, and at twelve o'clock we began our route sketch.

The survey made by the officers of the Sinai Expedition, and the previous researches of Mr. Holland, had left no part of the Peninsula of Sinai unexplored but the district lying at the head of Wády Gharandel and that immediately beyond 'Ain Hudherah. As a knowledge of these tracts of country was, however, important to the completion of the map, and especially to the accurate delineation of the outline of the cliffs which form the edge of the Tîh plateau, we determined to commence our explorations from the southern side, in preference to following the usual route from Egypt taken by the Mecca Pilgrim Caravan, and which crosses the flat and perfectly uninteresting



In Wády Wutáh.

desert to the west of Nakhl. Taking up the work at the point where Captain Palmer's reconnaissance ends, we made the route sketch of Wády Wutáh, of which I had the pleasure to forward a tracing to the Society, and which, I understand, has been incorporated into the maps of the Ordnance Survey. In this and all subsequent surveying operations we made use of the prismatic compass, and in order to avoid any inaccuracies, we laid down all angles with a graduated ruler and protractor on the spot.

The head of Wády Gharandel is a broad space broken up by sandhills, on the top of which we found many tracks of gazelles, bedan bustards, &c. At one part of the road was the vestige of a recent fire, and near it were the charred bones of a camel. The Arabs declared that, a little while before, a pack of wolves had attacked and killed a camel at this spot, and the owner and his friends coming up, frightened away the beasts and cooked and eat the carcass. The wády, after a few hours, narrows slightly into the Seil Wády Elseifeh, where we encamped.

In the morning we continued our route sketch. At the entrance to Wády Wutáh are some fine nawámís and a zigzag path up the mountain side leading to a sort of cave or gallery which the Arabs still make use of as a shelter in rainy weather. Wády Wutáh at this part is narrow and winding, and filled with boulders and the *débris* of former seils, which have evidently swept at different times with considerable force through the valley. We stayed to rest about one o'clock under a cliff where is a curious natural cave and some inscriptions consisting chiefly of figures of animals, amongst them a curious procession in which the figures bear a strong resemblance to the ibis of the Egyptian hieroglyphics. A little way from this we passed the tents of Silmán, the 'Agýd, or military general of the 'Aleygát tribe, who asked us politely in to have coffee, but we were too much pressed for time to be able to accept the invitation. The wády continues very winding, and is broken up with boulders and long spurs of the mountains running at short intervals into its bed. At one point in the valley the mountains come down into rocks, about fifteen feet high, meeting in the wády bed, with a path not more than a yard and a half wide between them. About an hour from our last camp was a little spring on the right-hand side, in a narrow ledge of rock, with a few stunted palm-trees growing by its side. A little farther on the wády widens into a circle which has been washed out by the seil, or flood, and shortly afterwards goes through a fine pass about twenty feet wide between sandstone rocks. At four o'clock we encamped at the head of Wády Wutáh, the continuation of which winds round into the mountains again, being called Wády Umm Dúd. Close by our camp were the tents of Khamís, the sheikh of the Ezmeileh, a branch of the 'Aleygát Arabs. He came down to meet us in the valley, and when we had encamped brought us a sheep as a present, for which we gave him two rupees. The sheikh himself acted as butcher; its kidneys, heart, and liver made an excellent dish, though we regretted that we had neither bacon nor onions to fry

with it; but old Salem supplied the deficiency by cooking it with salt water in lieu of fat. In accordance with the rules of Arab hospitality, the sheikh accompanied us the best part of a day's journey, and guided us up a ravine called Tel'at umm Rútheh. It is a narrow, winding ravine, with one or two grand gorges, and here and there a rather difficult piece of climbing. About an hour took us to the top of the pass, the camels coming by a somewhat easier way a little lower down. The pass down into the plain, or rather valley, Rás Hamr, is a very steep and difficult one. A long and tiring march brought us to Serábit el Khádem some time after nightfall. The next morning we sent the camels on to camp in Wády Khamíleh, and went ourselves up the mountain by the ravine above the camp. Here we spent the morning in examining the ruins and scraping about for curiosities, and reached camp about half an hour before sunset. The next day, being Christmas Day, we determined to remain in camp, and accordingly spent the morning in sketching. A monk passed us on his way to Cairo, and stayed to have a few minutes' conversation in bad French. Then came a great excitement, Haméd, one of the camel men, having discovered a snake; it turned out to be a cerastes, and Mr. Drake promptly seized it with a forked stick and put it into spirits. After a chat over the camp fire with the Arabs we went to bed, having spent a very pleasant Christmas Day.

Passing through Seil Barg and Wády Lebweh, we came to Erweis el Arneb, just below Zibb el Baheir, where we encamped. Having ascended the last-named mountain to enjoy the magnificent prospect from the summit, we entered Wády Berráh, and turning down the wády to the left, visited the springs at Erthámeh, which are situated in a very pretty and romantic granite glen, and camped, after a long day's march, at the Tarfah grove in Wády es Sheikh, having passed several Russian pilgrims on the road.

On the 28th December we reached the Convent of St. Catherine, and as the superior was "at home," succeeded in gaining admittance to the archbishop's apartments, in which the most valuable part of the MS. treasures are kept, and inspected some of the most important ones. The well-known Codex Aureus is a beautifully-written copy of the four Gospels, containing illuminated portraits of the Evangelists and other sacred personages. It is attributed to the Emperor Theodosius, the Colophon giving the date and transcriber's name in the abbreviated Uncial characters. A collation of this manuscript would, doubtless, prove of great value in determining the accurate text of the Gospels, although the date, A.D. 1413, which is assigned to it, is not sufficiently remote to give it any very high authority. A person exercising *tact*, and remaining sufficiently long at the Convent, might copy, and, perhaps, photograph every leaf. I endeavoured to impress upon the monks that no other design prompts an investigation of their books than that of benefiting sacred literature by a description of the works in their possession. There are other very interesting works in the collection, amongst them an ancient copy of the Psalms

in Georgian, written on papyrus, and a curious copy of the Psalms in Greek, written in a minute female hand, on six small pages, but without a date. Amongst a pile of patristic and other works of no great age or interest, are some curious old Syriac books and one or two palimpsests. Our necessarily hurried visit prevented us from examining these with any great care; but they would, no doubt, well repay investigation. The proximity of the Convent to civilised parts, the frequent intercourse of the monks with European scholars and travellers, and more especially the renown of the Codex Sinaiticus, are causes that militate strongly against any chance of procuring much of bibliographical interest from the Convent of St. Catherine, beyond the possible results of a thorough examination of the library.

From Jebel Músa we proceeded to 'Ain Hudherah, and commenced the survey at the point where Captain Wilson and myself had retraced our steps on the occasion of our former visit. As this point has been determined by the Ordnance Survey, the whole of our subsequent work is connected with that of the Sinai Expedition by an unbroken series of compass bearings, and as these, after extending over upwards of 600 miles of country, show an almost inappreciable error on subsequently joining a place the latitude of which has been ascertained, I may venture to say that the accuracy of our observations is to be depended upon, and that our map exactly represents the geographical features of the country.

I have already, in previous communications, adverted to the curious remains at Erweis el Ebeirig, near 'Ain Hudherah, which I then believed to be relics of an Israelitish camp. Our second visit on this occasion entirely confirmed this supposition, and the further discovery of what were undoubtedly tombs outside the camp seemed to point with still more certainty to the identification of this spot with Kibroth Hattaavah, the scene of the dreadful pestilence described in Numbers xi. 31. The distance from Jebel Músa on the one hand, and from 'Ain Hudherah on the other, exactly corresponds with the position of Kibroth Hattaavah relative to Mount Sinai and Hazeroth, as given in the scriptural account; and the discovery is therefore not only important as confirming the opinion set forth by the Sinai Survey with regard to the position of the Mountain of the Law, but as enabling us to trace the route by which the Israelites left the Peninsula of Sinai for the scene of their Forty Years' Wanderings.

The situation is a most commanding one, and the hill-sides and more elevated portions of the watershed are covered for more than a mile in every direction with curiously arranged stones, evidently the remains of a large encampment; but differing essentially from any others that I have seen in the country, whether Arab or otherwise. The larger inclosures occupied by the more important personages, the hearths or fire-places, &c., are still distinctly to be traced. The extent of the remains, indicating the assemblage of an unusually large concourse of people, and above all, the curious story of the lost Hajj

caravan, all tend to confirm the supposition that we have here really a vestige of the Exodus.

Some distance farther on we came to some well-built, regular nawámís, on a sandbank, at the bottom of which was a rude wall. This seems to have been used as a fort, a conjecture strengthened by the fact that there are a fair number of flint arrow-heads and flakes lying about. About half-past three or four o'clock we reached Hudheibat Hejáj, where we found the tent pitched; but as we had told Sheikh Hassan to encamp near the Shagíf, we made him pack up again and proceed to the appointed spot. We then went up to the cleft, and were as much struck as before with the beauty of the prospect, although the light was not quite good enough to bring out in all their perfection the lovely tints of the rocks and mountains. We ascended the hill to the right side of the cleft, on the top of which is a well-built, oval erection, evidently used as a beacon in former times, and apparently, one of those posts which gave the present name to the spot, Matáli Hudherah, "The look-outs of Hazeroth." There are many Greek and Sinaitic inscriptions on the neighbouring rocks, which I imagine were written by the soldiers and sentries once posted there, as one or two have the word στρατιωτης after their names. The spring itself, 'Ain Hudherah, was once undoubtedly a monkish colony; the old walls, the well-made aqueduct, the religious inscriptions, and the legend of the Báb er Rúm, or "Greek Gate," all point to this fact.

Our next object was to determine the connection, if any, between 'Ain Hudherah and el 'Ain el 'Elyá. We found that a communication does exist between them; but the road is impassable for camels; but as there was also another road beside the one already known, we determined to follow it and approach Jebel el 'Ejmeh (the point at which we intended to enter the Tîh) from that direction. The camels had been sent round to Seil Hudherah, and as we came down by the Shagíf we saved some four or five hours, which time we spent in sketching by the Palm Grove. At about half-past three o'clock we started, began our route sketch, and camped immediately above the place where Wády Ghazáleh comes in (the camel track), at the meeting of several wádies. The country begins to show a rather different formation from the sandstone mountains and sandy plains through which we had been passing for the last day and a half; the valleys are very distinctly marked, and the rocks at the side consist of green stone, with an overlying stratum of sandstone, which has been denuded off in all save the high and sharp ridges and peaks. The sides of Wády Hudherah itself consist of detached mountains, which give it the appearance of being broken into numerous side wádies. Our road lay up Wády Elt'hí, a broad valley with a steep rise of nearly 1,000 feet; the wády on the other side of the watershed takes the same name, an unusual circumstance in Arabian nomenclature. Passing over this watershed, through a narrow nagb, or pass, it again widens out into a broad valley, and flows down into Wády el 'Ain. A little way down the latter valley, and at the mouth of

Wády 'Arádeh, we came across some of the Haiwátt Arabs, a boy and two old women. The boy brought a lynx skin (which he called a wild cat), and sold it to us for three piastres. He was extremely astonished at our knowing the names of the wádies, and screamed out with delight to tell the old woman of our wonderful information. She at once proceeded to try and turn it to account, by asking us if there would soon be rain; and began to expatiate on the misery to which the drought was bringing the Arabs. When we told her we hoped there would be, but could not tell, she seemed very incredulous, and muttered that she had always understood that rain was in the hands of the Christians. We then tried to bargain with them for a lamb, but could not come to terms, as they refused to take 1s. 6d. for it, and we were not disposed to give any more. This and other loitering upon the road made us so late, that we had to do the last mile or so of route sketch in the dark, lighting matches to read the angles by. Just before we reached camp, a Terbání Arab, whom we had met at the early part of the day, overtook us, accompanied by his father, and bringing a bedan for sale. These two insisted upon their prerogative, as the rightful owners of the soil, to conduct us instead of the Emzaineh Arab whom we had brought with us as guide, and the latter had to go back, the hunter coming with us on the same terms.

We offered five francs for the bedan, which was accepted with wonderful cheerfulness, and we found, from Sálem later on, that the Arabs were not disposed to offend us, or to dispute anything we might say, *lest we should stop the rain!* A dog was loitering about the camp with a string tied tightly round his stomach, so that he should not eat too much. The wády just below our camp began to be very winding, and continued so as far as a broad open place called the 'Agúlah, where there were some palms and water. After this it goes on in a straight line for an hour, then winds again for a little distance, and ultimately finds its way through a very narrow, winding gorge, with grand precipitous sides, into 'Ain el 'Elyá. Here is a spring of running water, with a few palm-trees, and the valley opens out into a large plain covered with hills and vegetation (palms and tamarisk trees), where we encamped.

Shortly after leaving this place we came to a group of nawámís on the hills to the left of the wády, which were more perfect than any we had hitherto seen in the peninsula. They consisted of two detached houses, on separate hills, and a group of five on the side of a higher eminence. The two first had been used as Arab burial-places; but at least three out of the five were apparently untouched. Their dimensions averaged 7ft. high by 8ft. in diameter, but one was fully 10ft. high and 8ft. diameter inside. They were circular, with an oval top; the construction is the same as that of the nawámís in Wády Hebrán, but the perfect condition in which they have been preserved exhibits, in a much more striking degree, the neatness and art with which they were built. In the centre of each was a cist, and beside that a smaller hole, both roughly lined with stones; these were covered with slabs of stone, over which earth had accumulated. Some human bones which we found in the cists at first led us to the conclusion that they

were tombs, but the small size of the cist, and the evident fact that they had never contained perfect skeletons, proved that idea to be erroneous. In the smaller cist the earth showed signs of having undergone the action of fire, and in one or two small pieces of charred bone and wood were found. The doors, which are about 2ft. square, are admirably constructed, with lintel and doorposts. All the stones used in the construction are so carefully selected as almost to give the appearance of being hewn, and those in some of the doors have certainly been worked, if not with any instrument, at least rubbed smooth with other stones. A flint arrow-head and some small shells were found in one of the nawámís. They are evidently dwelling-houses; but to what race they belonged I must leave to those who are better versed in the science of prehistoric man to determine; the remains are certainly some of the most interesting which I have met with in the East. The country all around is covered with them, every hillside having some remains of nawámís upon them; but owing to their exposed position they have none of them been preserved in so perfect a state as those just described. Close by the nawámís were some stone circles. There would seem to have been a large settlement of these people in the neighbourhood of 'Ain el 'Elyá. The word *námús*, plural *nawámís*, signifies mosquitoes, and is applied by the Towarah Arabs to any kind of stone hut, the origin of which is unknown, from the tradition which exists amongst them, that they were built by the children of Israel for a protection against the plague of mosquitoes sent by Heaven as a chastisement for their rebellion and sins. The other Arab tribes do not know the name, and call them merely *gusúr*, or castles.

A little above this point the wady broadens out into a wide plain, and on the left is an opening called El Magráh, which leads, by a journey of about half a day, to the Matál'i el Hudherah, (winding round the shoulder of a mountain called Jebel el Migairáh,) and also to the plain before Hudherah, called Ridhán Eshka'a; the road is, however, only passable for foot passengers. A chain of mountains divides Wády Hudherah and Wády el 'Ain, so that to reach the one from the other a journey of at least three days has to be performed, which, if this road were open, might be done in half a day. As we had lost so much time at the náwamís, we did not get into camp until nearly eight o'clock, very tired and hungry.

On January 10th we followed Wády Biyár, which runs broad and straight for about an hour and a half, when it turns off, leaving Wády 'Edeid (called on the maps Hadaiyid) on the left. This wády has its watershed on a shoulder of Jebel Dhallal, the other side falling into Wady Síg. On our way we saw many footprints of storks, which are called by the Arabs Erhái, made in the dry mud; they had stopped here in the course of their last year's migration from Syria to Nubia. The wády then bends and winds until, after passing through some hills of conglomerate, it leads to the wells (Biyár), from which it receives its name. These are three or four deep wells of rather dirty water, for flocks and herds have used the troughs for centuries, if we may

judge from the accumulation of dirt and dung. Over the mouth of some were placed large stones, closing them up; others had the stones removed; the whole formed a striking illustration of the passage in Genesis xxix. 7—9: "Till they roll the stones from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep." Thunder rolling, throughout the whole afternoon, forewarned us that rain was shortly going to set in, but we luckily reached camp by four o'clock, and had therefore time to dig a trench round the tent and take all necessary precautions against the storm. Presently it began to rain steadily, and in the course of the evening poured down in perfect torrents, a seil, or flood, taking place in the neighbouring wády. We were also awakened, in the middle of the night, by a tremendous downfall of rain, which poured over the tent as though fire-engines were sluicing it. As the next morning was still stormy, and rain was constantly falling, we were unable to continue our march, and therefore stayed in, to work up our maps and journals. A little while before sunset we went out to look at the stone circles which exist in large numbers around the spot. They have for the most part a heap of stones, like those of Jebel Hadîd, forming the tomb, and an open small enclosure, or cist, apparently used for sacrificial purposes. On opening one or two of these we discovered a quantity of burnt earth and stones, mingled with pieces of charcoal.

As soon as the weather would permit, we went on up the valley, which here takes the name of Wády Mîrád, from the watering-place (Biyár) to which it leads, and reached Jebel el 'Ejmeh, at the foot of which is a large plain covered with rolling hills, and intersected by small wády beds. This part is covered with nawámís,—large stone circles like those near our last camp, but more perfectly preserved. A little distance from these are the remains of a large settlement surrounded by walls from three and a half to four feet high. The ground-plan of the enclosures could be very plainly perceived. These stone circles at the foot of the Nagb el Mírád are of a different character to the carefully constructed dwellings in Wády el Biyár. They consist of a collection of circles with rudely-heaped walls, and are probably traces of camps, a conclusion to which we were led by having observed similar enclosures in use at the present day on Mount Hermon. There similar low rude walls were found, into which branches of acacia and other thorny trees were inserted, thus forming an impassable barrier. In the *dowárs* of Morocco a similar contrivance is made use of for protection against robbers and wild beasts, for which purpose the low walls alone would be useless. We next ascended Jebel 'Ejmeh by the pass, not a difficult one, but never before known to European travellers. From the top the view of Sinai was very fine, although clouds hid many of the principal distant mountains from our view. The first glimpse of the Tîh, however, which we got from the same point is anything but inviting, consisting simply of round featureless hills or tumuli, with small winding wádies between. One is exactly like the other, and, as they are all on the same dead level, there is not anything to vary the monotony

of the scene. We camped not far from the Nagb, and, taking our instruments with us, proceeded up the mountain to take observations. The name Ejmeh may be a corruption, or rather Arab adaptation of the Hebrew Ijim (as in Ije Abarim), a word signifying *tumuli* or round featureless hills, a description which would exactly correspond to any part of the prospect to the north from Jebel 'Ejmeh. There is an abundance of dark-coloured herbage all about, the *firs*, a kind of *'ajram*, and the *gataf*, a fleshy-leafed plant with a somewhat pleasant acid taste, not unlike sorrel, and used by the Arabs as food.

Early the next morning we proceeded to the highest point of Jebel el 'Ejmeh, where there is a cairn or námús apparently of great antiquity. From this we took bearings, boiled the hypsometer, and read the aneroids, sketching in all the country that lay within the range of our vision. The view to the south is a very fine one, an immense expanse of low sandstone mountains, intersected by winding valleys, and forming a large plateau on a lower level between this and the Sinai mountains: to the west it goes off into a plain. The horizon is skirted by the different groups of Jebel Feiráni, Jebel umm 'Alowí, Jebel Catarína, Tarbúsh, and Serbal, and the long ridge of Jebel 'Ejmeh itself extending to our right and left. The reading of the instruments were: aneroid, 25·68 (mean); hypsometer, 204·10; thermometer, 51. On the plains, or rather hill-tops and small plateaus beneath, we noticed many remains of nawámís, dwellings, and cemeteries. Jebel Catarína and the mountains of 'Akabah were covered with snow.

Jebel el 'Ejmeh has been proposed as a possible site for the scene of the revelation of the law instead of Jebel Músa; but I do not consider either the mountain or the plain adapted for the events of the Bible narrative. The mountain is not an isolated block, but a long ridge, or rather cliff, forming the edge of the Tíh Plateau, while the plain is an irregular rolling surface, and ill-suited for the encampment of a large body of men.

Proceeding the whole day through the same monotonous round hillocks, we reached the point where the Wády Rawág widens out and is joined by Wády umm Girsúmeh, near which we encamped. There were still some clouds hanging about, and the bright red lights and delicate rose tints of the afterglow were finer than I had seen even in Egypt. Nearly every hill had a námús or stone circle on the top.

The wády above our camp was about two miles wide, and continued to broaden out,—long, low limestone ridges taking the place of the rounded hillocks through which we had been passing, and at last it became almost lost in a large plain of soft gravelly soil covered with coarse flints. From a sort of mound on the centre (there are two or three, under one of which we encamped) we could see a line of white hills exactly resembling tents, and called Al Kheimatein. Near these is situated Nakhl, and beyond is seen the shadowy outline of Jebel Yeleg. For another day we travelled over the same uninteresting,

featureless plain, when one of our men overtook some Arabs whom we had noticed ahead of us. They told him the route, for we had lost the way, and we followed, and ultimately overtook the Arabs ourselves in the neighbouring wády, Wády Ghabiyeh. It proved to be the nephew of the sheikh of the Teyáheh, a very picturesque person, who was travelling back to Nakhl with his wife, having been to get his tents, &c., from his storehouse by Jebel el 'Ejmeh. They were encamped near the water, which, as some rain had recently fallen, was plentiful in the valley, and desired us to stay there too; but as we preferred pushing on, our Teyáheh friend packed up his goods and chattels, and came with us.

On January 17th we arrived at Nakhl, accompanied by the Teyáhah family and some goats, kids, and children, perhaps as disreputable a caravan as ever entered the place. Nakhl is a wretched square fort in the midst of a glaring desert plain, the picture being backed up with some rather pretty limestone mountains. On the hills we found a great deal of Iceland moss growing. At the fort we were received by the captain of the guard, a dark noseless Arab, and presently the Effendi himself, the Názir, joined us, and we drank coffee with him and smoked pipes on the great divan at the end of the hall, a very motley crowd sitting upon the floor in the centre. None of the soldiers were in uniform, and they were as scoundrelly a set as one could well conceive; but the scene was a most amusing and interesting one, being thoroughly Oriental in every respect. We pitched the tent, and after dinner there came a man from the fort saying that the Názir had insisted upon our having a guard of ten men round the tents, but going up to the fort myself, I reduced the number to four. Presently the sheikh of the Teyáhah came in, accompanied by his brother, and talked till midnight, a crowd of ruffians sitting around the door and making the tent dreadfully hot and our heads ache with their noisy talk. After some difficulty we came to an understanding with them, and they agreed to take us all over as much of their country as possible; but arrangements were not concluded without considerable trouble, and, indeed, some risk; and much time was consumed in noisy altercation, and in resisting their attempts at extortion and intimidation. The greatest caution and firmness are necessary in dealing with them, and every point is contested with equal obstinacy on both sides; but, having once signed and sealed the contract, we had no hesitation in committing ourselves to their good faith; poor old Salem, our Sinai Arab attendant, was, however, so much impressed with their violence that he forthwith decamped to his own more peaceful mountains, and we had the additional trouble of cooking, washing, &c., thrown on our own hands. The scene at the fort, where the contract was written out and signed, was again a curious one. Mr. Drake and I were seated on a divan at the upper end of the hall, or rather gate, the Effendi on a chair beside us, the captain of the guard on our left, and next to him the sheikh of the Teyáhah, his brother Suleimán, and Sheikh Hassan, our

former employé. The latter, notwithstanding the presence of the Effendi, indulged in the most impolite language against the Egyptian soldiery generally, because the garrison had impounded one of his camels for a debt owing to them by some of the Towarah. At every turn Sheikh Mislih or his brother tried to cheat us, but we were always on the look-out, and had our contract written according to the terms we had originally proposed and agreed upon. We next dismissed the Towarah, poor old Salem amongst them, and made our dinner ourselves, assisted (or rather hindered) by the wretched scoundrels who represented the Egyptian army about our tent, and for a little time enjoyed some quiet. Mislih, the chief sheikh of the Teyáhah, was not only independent, but rude and obtrusive in demeanour; his brother Suleimán was a very intelligent man, but alternately surly and communicative, and to manage them was by no means an easy task.

At last, on January 20th, 1870, we were fairly started with our Teyáhah guides; and toiling over the same level desert, struck Wády Erwág, which here comes in between the two tents (Kheimatain), and joins Wády el 'Aríish south of Jebel Yeleg, near which we encamped. The Arabs, not being able to pronounce our names, at once dubbed me 'Abdallah, and Drake 'Alí, and the names clung to us during the rest of our sojourn in the desert. In the evening, Suleimán came in to have his usual chat, and told us of some ruins in Gureiyeh, which we determined to visit. He said—"We never let travellers see anything, but make them march straight on. If we were to say there are ruins here or there, the traveller would have to call the dragoman; the latter would grumble at the trouble, and whatever the traveller gives, the dragoman keeps." One of our men had his finger and thumb cut off last year in a marauding expedition, and our Sheikh Suleimán ibn Hamd ibn 'Amir, also says that if he had not been with us he would have been off towards Syria after plunder, while his brother was attending to the Hajj. As soon as the tent was pitched, a sudden storm came on, sand filled the tent, and was immediately followed by a heavy fall of rain, which continued at intervals throughout the night, accompanied by vivid lightning. When we opened the door of the tent next morning heavy clouds were lowering over the horizon, but as the sun was shining we determined to march; the Arabs, however, were so long in loading that it was late before we got off. After walking for about half an hour we came into Wády el 'Aríish, which comes down from the Rás Emraikheh on the north side of Wády Síg and flows past Nakhl to this point, where it is joined by Wády Erwág and flows down to the Mediterranean. The journey was along a level plain with occasional wádies, small tributaries of Wády el 'Aríish, their course being marked by a line of desert vegetation and here and there cut up into deep furrows and channels by the water. In a jorf (steep bank), in Wády el 'Aríish we found small shells and charcoal, and in one place the remains of a wood fire, and even the stones of the hearth, at a depth of eight feet below the surface. When we had reached this

point we were overtaken by a heavy storm of rain, and were soon completely wet through. Passing by the two branches of Wády Abu Jizl, we came at last to Wády el 'Aggáb, where we were again caught in a storm, and had to pitch the tent amid a drenching shower. This spot has some very well preserved specimens of stone heaps and circles, similar to those which we remarked in Wady Biyár. One which looked like a grave we opened, but could find nothing but burnt earth, which seemed to indicate the fact that the body had been burnt, and these stones with the circle round them heaped up to mark the spot. No one, the Arabs declared, had visited these ruins before. They told us also of some others, about a day and a half this side of Nagb Mirád, to the west of our path, where there is "a white mountain" (*Taur Abyadh*), and several caves, with thick pillars, excavated in the rock, and great heaps of stones and "camps" (*mahattát*) in front of them. It would be simply impossible for travellers not knowing Arabic to travel in this country off the ordinary route, and even we were obliged to humour them considerably. Bullying does no good, and one has to appeal to their word and promises, and to promise in return. An expedition would have great difficulty in working here, and could not do it unless one of the party were perfectly acquainted with Arabic and they had large funds at their command.

In the morning we went out to look at the nawámís, or, as these Arabs call them, *mahattát* (*i.e.*, camping-grounds). Suleimán came into the tent and suggested that we might go by ourselves and do as we pleased, a great concession from such a tribe as the Teyáheh. In the same way, when we came back one of the men picked up our *fás* and crowbar, and said, in a very suspicious tone, "Look here, Suleimán, they've been digging!" "Well," said he, very curtly, "what if they have? What do you suppose they came here for?" The ruins are simply cairns, with only one stone circle amongst them. They extend for a great distance around, and number nearly 100. We opened the stone circle and found charcoal and burnt earth in what we have called the sacrificial area, but nothing at all in the central cairn. We also opened one of the largest of the cairns, but although we dug down in the middle of it to the depth of five feet and came to the solid rock, we could find no trace of a burial. The same thing had happened to us in Wády Bíyár, we could find the burnt earth in the small enclosures, but never any trace of the skeleton, as in those on the granite soil of Sinai. This I attribute to the action of the lime, which would, no doubt, in such a length of time as must have elapsed since they were constructed, have assimilated the lime in the bones, and so destroyed all traces of the sepulture. Whatever the people may have been, whether Amalekites or an older race, it seems nearly certain that they buried in cists, piled great cairns on the top, surrounded the whole with a stone circle in the case of more important personages, and offered sacrifices to the deceased in small open enclosures situated within the ring. These may probably have been the

"offerings to the dead," the eating of which was accounted so great a sin to the Israelites. The custom still survives in the offering up of sacrifices at the tombs of welis (or sheikhs), *i.e.*, saints. I believe the only sacrifice permitted by the Mohammedan law is that at the Hajj, but the ceremonies there observed were retained, no doubt perforce, by Mohammed, who would have been unable to induce his people to give up rites so time-honoured as those appertaining to the Kaabeh at Mecca. The size of the largest cairns was about twenty feet in diameter (the shape being circular) and the height about four feet. We found a piece of coral by one of the heaps. This collection of stone remains is called El 'Uggábeh.

After Wády 'Aggab the desert again preserves its unvaried and barren character. Here and there, as we crossed the bed of some small wády, we saw a few shrubs, but they were always the driest and scantiest of desert herbage. The only living things we met with were some locusts, one raven, and a desert lark. Forty minutes from camp we came to a low pass called Rás Fahdí, a descent of 100 feet from which brought us into a broad plain narrowing slightly into a wády of the same name, Wády Fahdí, so called from a saint whose seyál tree stands there. By this valley, just at the corner of Jebel Ikhrimm, are several small stone heaps, and a line drawn with a stick or spear in the flint-covered gravel which years have not yet effaced. These heaps mark the graves of Arabs who fell in a fight which took place here between the Beni Wásil, a branch of the Towarah tribe, and the Dhallám, or Arabs of Tell 'Arád. The former had made a raid into the Towarah country and carried off a herd of camels. The Beni Wásil started in pursuit and caught up the marauders at this spot, when a fierce encounter took place, many men falling on either side. At last, neither party gaining any decisive advantage, they agreed to a cessation of hostilities and a compromise; the chiefs on either side drew this line upon the ground, saying, "God has drawn a line between you and us," and half the camels were driven off by the Beni Wásil, and the other half taken back to Sinai. A girl named Suleimah had come with her family from Sinai to follow the fortunes of her friends; at the instigation of her companions she sat upon the long low ridge called Towalíyeh and watched the progress of the battle. The spot whereon she sat is marked with a rather larger heap of stones; and a verse of poetry, in which the request that she would go up and look on the fight was couched, is still remembered by the people. From the pass a very good view is obtained of the mountain district with Jebels 'Araif, Es Sharaif, &c. As the men were obliged to go back from this point to Wády el 'Aríish to water the camels, we stayed in camp and did up the map. A sandstorm was blowing all day, which filled everything with dust and obscured even the nearest mountains. On January 26th we started again. A few minutes after leaving camp we came to Wády Garaiyeh—a very broad level valley which stretches on one side right up to the base of Jebel 'Araif, and along this we went until

we found some water which had been brought there by the late rains. In order to take advantage of this we were obliged to encamp at some retem bushes near which the water ended. Feeding here was a herd of more than 150 milch camels. The next day came another dense sandstorm and the weather was very hot and oppressive. The march was a most dreary one, as it was impossible to see more than a few hundred yards ahead, and the scene was as truly desert and desolate as can well be imagined. On our way, an old Arab, named Músa, the proprietor of the ruins which we were going to see, met us, and hearing that we were bound for his dwelling, became anxious about the rain for his crops, and begged Suleimán to camp short of the Contelleh that night, and take us past it without stopping. Suleimán replied that he had promised to take us, and take us he would, and that if Músa made any disturbance we would camp right in the middle of his field, and bury therein a piece of paper written with such magical characters that whenever the rain did come it would turn off to the right and left, and never moisten the soil, and that we would put some stuff in his wells that should effectually prevent any water from coming into them in future. This so frightened the old fellow that he gave in. After a short march we reached the scene of our explorations about noon. The place is called Contellet Garaiyeh; it is a white hill with a depressed top, the edges of it having the appearance of a mound surrounding the whole. This is found on digging to contain the *débris* of an old wall destroyed by fire. The Arabs said that they had dug up two large jars here, which were in such a good state of preservation that they still used them for water. We dug into the *débris* ourselves, and found some sun-dried bricks and beams of wood with signs of mortices, bolts, &c., which proved to be a sort of framework covering a series of large amphoræ, four of which we uncovered. One of these we dug out and put together; it was marked on the shoulder with a Phœnician aleph. The four jars were carefully fitted into a hollow or recess in the foundation of the wall, placed side by side, and closely packed with straw, ashes, and other rubbish. They were no doubt used as receptacles for water, as in the bottom of the broken one which we dug out we found a cake of clay exactly resembling the residue of the water of the country when it settles, and differing from the other dust and earth with which the jar was filled. The use of wood in the building was worth notice, as the pieces we found were of *seyál* (or shittim wood), and, excepting one on Wády Fahdí, there is not a single tree of the kind in the Tîh at the present day. Indeed, the only tree we saw after leaving Sinai, besides the one just mentioned, was the *nebuk* or *sidr* inside the fort at Nakhl. In the afternoon we went to look at some wells which exist in the neighbourhood, but which do not contain any water except when a great rain brings a flood down the valley and fills them. They are four or five in number, but only two of any size or apparently very old. Husein, the sheikh of the Arabs in the neighbourhood, asked me to tell him whether there was not some well containing fresh water somewhere

about the neighbourhood. He said I ought to know, and if I did not, I might find out from some of our books.

On January 30th we started for Jebel 'Araif, but owing to the scheming of Suleimán, who would take the farthest way round, we were obliged to camp short of it that day. The journey was over a level plain, and perfectly uninteresting, a few stone circles and heaps being all that we could find. By two o'clock the next day we camped in Wády Máyin, at the foot of 'Araif. A little way from the mountain were some stone circles (tombs), and at the mouth of the wády the remains of what was once a large collection of dwellings belonging to the same people. They are so destroyed, however, by the seils as to be scarcely distinguishable at a distance from ordinary collections of stones. They form a striking instance of a city that has "become a desolate heap."

On preparing for an early start the following morning, we found some Arabs at the camp fire, who declared that we should not go up the mountain. Knowing this to be all nonsense, we returned curt answers to their impudent remarks, and left Suleimán to settle with them while we had breakfast. We then started off for the mountain, and after a stiff climb of about an hour and a half reached the summit. Our path lay along a steep ravine full of vegetation, and across a difficult shoulder of the mountain to the summit. The mountain consists of a series of jagged peaks of hard limestone, the strata being very much distorted, and having the appearance of a great upheaval. There are no fossils whatever, nor indeed did we see such a thing in the whole country. The observations taken from the summit were of great use to us in determining the lie of the country, and in correcting previous maps. For instance, the high cliff noticed by Dr. Robinson, and called by him Jebel Mukhrah, is not an isolated mountain like 'Araif, but the precipitous edge of an extensive mountain plateau called Magráh, which, though intersected by several broad wádies, runs northwards, without any break, to a point within a few miles of Wády Seba, where it is divided by Wády er Rakhmah from the mountains of that name. To the west of this plateau, and forming the eastern border of the desert of et Tîh, are a number of lower mountain groups, amidst which the wádies which take their rise in the heart of Jebel Magráh meander on their way to the sea. This country is of course much more fertile than the open plain, and here it is that the interest of the region culminates, for here must have been the scene of a great part at least of Israel's wanderings, and here, if anywhere, we must look for the traces of many of the cities and towns of "the south country" mentioned in the Scripture records.

To the west one looks down upon the broad expanse of the Tîh desert, the monotony of its level surface relieved by the ranges of Helál, Ikhrimm, &c., and to the south-west the large range of scattered hills which forms the head of Wády Guraiyeh. Into this valley all the drainage of the "mountains of the Azázimeh" runs. The rest of the view, namely,

to the east and north-east, is taken up with the immense plateau of Jebel Magráh, in the heart of which Wádies Mayín, Lussán, el 'Ain, &c., take their rise. At a point a few miles up in this mountain, where the Wády Ma'yín bifurcates, are the Biyár (wells) of Ma'yín, two in number, the water of which is described as being peculiarly good, and "sweet as the waters of the Nile." There are no ruins near the wells, or, indeed, in this valley at all, but a path, apparently ancient, consisting of eleven or twelve camel tracks, leads up to the water. From the summit of 'Araif you can just catch a glimpse of Jebel Shera, the mountains of the 'Arâbah. There are several stone heaps on the various peaks and ridges of the mountain. A walk of forty minutes from camp brought us to the other side of Wády Mayín. Here, on the shoulder of the hill which divides it from Wády Lussán, we came upon some ancient remains, an enclosure of rude stones, like the dwellings at Biyár. The smaller enclosure at the upper end was doubtless covered in for the residence, and the other larger enclosure or courtyard served as the dowar for the beasts and dependants. These are always on a hillside, or in some sheltered spot, while the tombs or stone heaps are invariably on the top or crest of a hill. The former, I should imagine, correspond to the *Hazeroth*, or enclosures used by the pastoral tribes mentioned in the Bible. A little farther on, and higher up on the intervening hills, is a high-road leading direct to 'Akabah, the course of it being marked by innumerable little heaps of stones stretching for a great distance around. Farther still are the Kharábát Lussán, or Ruins of Lussán, a great number of stone heaps, something like the ordinary cairns in construction, but not all quite circular, and built with more regularity. The Arabs have a story that a man of the 'Azázimeh, going across there one night, espied a light amongst the ruins. He at once proceeded towards the spot, and called out, "Who is encamping there?" but as soon as he had uttered the words the light disappeared, with the exception of a faint glimmer, and all that he could discover was a curiously cut stone still emitting a little light. This he took away with him in his flour-bag, and sold to a Christian in Jerusalem, who displayed great anxiety to possess it, and who gave him ten pounds for the curiosity. Descending into the valley of Lussán itself, we came upon long low walls of very careful construction, consisting of two rows of stones beautifully arranged in a straight line, with smaller pebbles between. One of these was 180 yards long, then came a gap, and another wall of 240 yards, at which point it turned round in a sharp angle with a gateway. The next was even larger, and here the object of the walls was at once apparent, as the enclosure was divided into large steps or terraces, to regulate the irrigation and distribute the water, the edge of each step being carefully built up with stones. They formed Mezár'i, or cultivated patches of ground, and from the art displayed in their arrangement belonged evidently to a later and more civilised people. On the hill-side, a few hundred yards away to the left, were other ruins, a dwelling-house and granary. The former was as well constructed as a modern house,

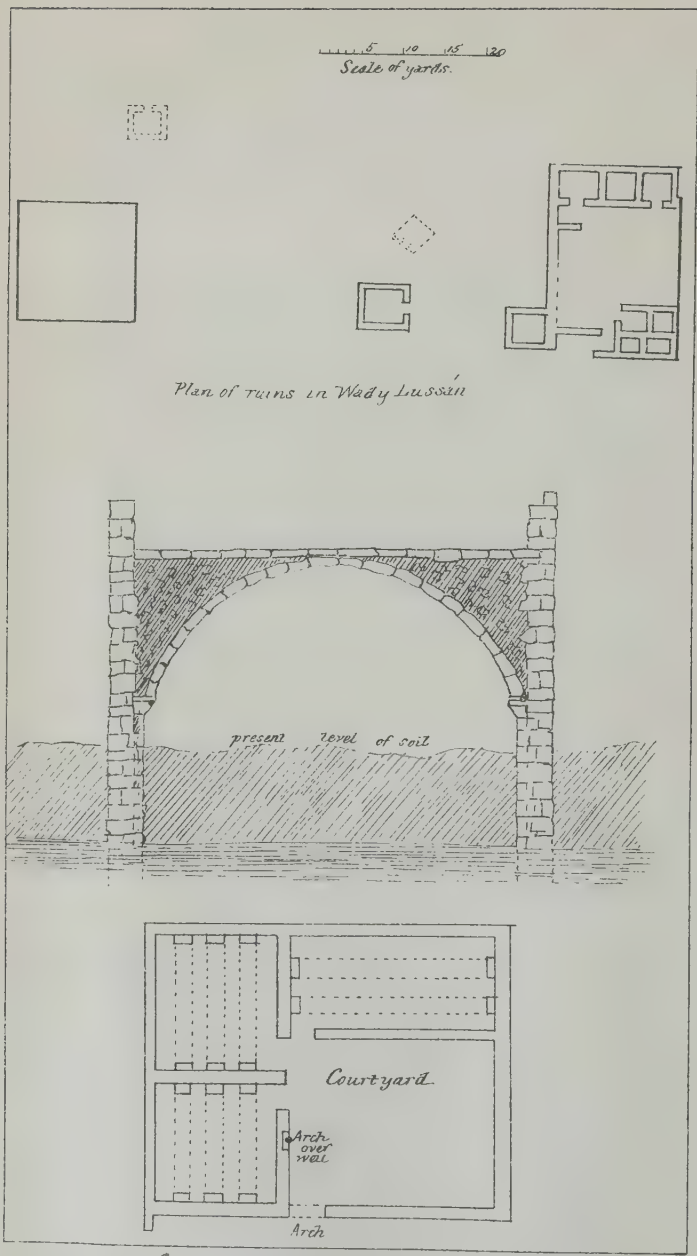
and the disposition of the chambers, with a courtyard in the centre of the building, reminded me of a Pompeian villa. Various pieces of fluted pottery were found about the place. In a little ravine close by was a cave, which no doubt served for a store-house, for which purpose the Arabs use it now.

Here Wády Lussán begins to narrow, and presently debouches upon a large open plain, where it is met by Wády Jerúr and other smaller wádies, which take their rise in the plateau of Jebel Magráh. The view is a fine one, although the outlines assumed by the limestone are not very imposing, and the landscape lacks the beautiful colouring of the Sinai mountains. From the cliffs which bound the plain runs down a valley called Wády Gadís, from a spring of that name at its head, and the plain itself is undoubtedly the wilderness of Kadesh, perhaps the most important site in the region, as it forms the key to the movements of the children of Israel during their Forty Years' Wanderings.

The identification of Ain Gadís with Kadesh was first suggested by Mr. Rowlands, but he seems to have applied the name wrongly to 'Ain el Gudeirát, some miles farther northward, and not to have visited this spot at all. The Ain Gadís* discovered by us consists of three springs, or rather shallow pools, called Themáil by the Arabs, one of them overflowing in the rainy season, and producing a stream of water. It is situated about lat. 31° 34′, long. 40° 31′, three miles above the watershed of the valley at that part of the previously unexplored mountain plateau of the Azázimeh, where this falls suddenly to a lower level, and, as we found on subsequently passing through it, is more open, less hilly, and more easily approached from the direction of Akabah; and is thus situated at what I should call one of the natural borders of the country. I will explain what I mean by the latter expression.

From Northern Syria to Sinai southwards the country seems to have certain natural divisions, marked by the comparative fertility of the soil of each. In Syria, at the present day, we have a well-watered and productive soil; in Palestine, after the Hermon district, the soil is much more barren, but must certainly at some time, when better cultivated, have been more productive; south of the mountains of Judæa, to the point immediately below which Gadís is situated, the country, though now little more than a barren waste (from the failure of the water-supply consequent upon neglect), presents signs of a most extensive cultivation, even at a comparatively modern period. This is undoubtedly the Negeb, or south country of Palestine, and 'Ain Gadís may be considered as situated nearly at the frontier of this district. Between this and the edge of the Tíh plateau the country is even more barren, but there are still traces of a primeval race of inhabitants, in the cairns and nawámís, or stone huts, to which I have before adverted. At the time of the Exodus it must have borne a

* This word is in meaning and etymology identical with the *Kadesh* of the Bible.



Plan of ruins in Wady Lussán

Ground plan & Section of house at S'baita.

similar relation to the then fertile region of the Negeb, which that now barren tract at the present day bears to Palestine. This would exactly answer to the description of the Bible, the Israelites waiting as it were on the threshold of the southern portion of the Promised Land; and from the analogous recession of fertility northwards we may fairly conclude that the surrounding country was better supplied with water than it is now, and that it was therefore at least as suitable for the encampment of the Israelitish hosts as any spot in Sinai. But the spies went up from Kadesh and returned thither, bringing the grapes from Eshkol; it may be, therefore, objected that if Hebron be Eshkol, the distance from that to 'Ain el Gadís is farther than the grapes could possibly have been brought, especially by men who would have to pass through the country with so much caution as they must have employed in their character of spies. Now, it is a curious fact that among the most striking characteristics of the Negeb are miles of hill-sides and valleys covered with the small stone heaps in regular swathes, along which the grapes were trained, and which still retain the name of *teleilát-el-'anab*, or grape-mounds. It may be that we shall have to modify the existing theories concerning the position of Eshkol, and indeed I have no doubt but that it is to be looked for a short distance from 'Ain Gadís; but in any case I think that no *primâ facie* difficulty need be made of the relative positions of Eshkol and the Kadesh which I am now advocating. Dr. Robinson's theory that Kadesh must be sought for at 'Ain el Weibeh, in the neighbourhood of the passes of Sufâh and Figreh, immediately below the southern border of Palestine, does not seem a tenable one, especially from strategic considerations, for the children of Israel would have been confined, as it were, in a *cul-de-sac*, with the subjects of King Arad, the Amorites, the Edomites, and the Moabites completely hemming them in, whereas in the neighbourhood of 'Ain el Gadis they would have had nothing but the wilderness around them, and certainly no very formidable hostile peoples in their rear.

From the point where Wádies Lussán and Jerúr meet, and, passing through a small opening, debouch upon the plain, we crossed over into a wády called Seisab, and there encamped. Turning out of the valley, we continued to cross the plain until we reached Wády el Muweileh, at the foot of the mountains of the same name, where there is a spring which has been suggested as probably identical with Hagar's Well, though the orthodox Mussulmán tradition places the latter in the neighbourhood of Mecca. The wády itself is curious, as it is filled with small isolated jorfs, which would seem at one time to have formed the level of the wády bed, and to have been eaten out by the stream into its present form. There are a number of wells of the same shape as those at Biyár near the Nagb el Mirád, and overflowing with water. At the upper end of the valley, on the right hand, is a little cave carefully cut out of the rock, apparently a chapel, as there are signs of painted

crosses on the walls, and one or two Christian signs, mixed with Arab tribe marks, on the rock outside. On the opposite side of the wády is another cave, of much more imposing dimensions, and which seems to have served as the hermitage. It contains one large chamber, with three or four other niches in it, each large enough for a sleeping apartment. This is some eight or nine feet up in the rock, and is approached by a well-made staircase, tunnelled underneath. All the hills round about are covered with ruins, stone heaps of the same or similar character to those which we noticed elsewhere, remains of some primitive people, and extending for miles around. They exist for the most part on the hill-tops, the sides being covered with innumerable paths. One peculiarity about the place is that most of the hills have rows of small cairns, well built and arranged along their edges, so as in every case to face the east. Here and there also are larger mounds and buildings. It would appear that there was once a large city here, perhaps one of the "cities of the south," and that the early Christians regarded it as sacred, from some tradition attaching to the spot. Suleimán told us that in Jebel el 'Ejmeh, a little north-east of Biyár, there is an excavation in the mountain, consisting of a series of caves similar to those at Muweileh, and leading from one to the other by subterranean passages for a distance of nearly a quarter of a mile.

It is difficult to say what could have been the use of the rows of stone heaps on the eastern edge of this mountain, but I think it quite possible that they may have some connection with Baal-worship, and their position—facing the rising sun—seems to favour the supposition.

Both of the caves above mentioned, of which Mr. Drake took photographs, were evidently the residences of some hermits, and from the appearance of the rocks beside the larger ones it seems probable that there are still more of them there, but covered up with *débris*. One part of the rock has certainly been similarly excavated, and has a mark upon the top of the door, which is blocked up with earth; indeed, Suleimán said that he remembered it before it was so covered up with *débris*, and it formed, he was sure, the entrance to a cave like the others. Both have been used by the Arabs as store-rooms for alkali, which they obtain from plants by burning, and sell at Gaza and elsewhere to the soap-makers. The large cave measures about 12 feet by 8 feet, with chambers 7 feet by 4 feet, 5 feet by 4 feet, and 5 feet by 4 feet; the smaller, 8 feet by 4 feet. During our stay at Muweileh we were astonished by the sudden appearance of Selámeh, one of our old Towarah Arabs, who had come from Gaza with his father, having conducted some travellers to that place from Cairo. They came to the tent door, and we had a long chat with them.

In the valley are one or two dams, suggesting that there must, at one time, have been cultivation to a considerable extent, as well as more water in the neighbourhood. Up the mountain behind the camp, leading to some of the best preserved stone heaps, is a regularly built-up path.

On February 8th, Tuesday, we left Muweileh, and, proceeding up

Wády Guseimeh for about an hour and a half, encamped amidst a scorching, blinding sandstorm. On the hill at the foot of which our tent was pitched was a ruin—a sort of rude dwelling-house, but more carefully built than the ordinary enclosure, as the foundation walls were formed of two rows of stones, with rubble between. This the sheikh pointed out as the limits of the territory of the "old Christians"* of Wády el 'Ain and Guseimeh, the limits of the Muweileh Nasárá's (Christian's) country being a range of hills a little to the east of the mountains of the same name. There were also some water-springs near our tents, the 'Aiyún Guseimeh, the position of which is marked by a melancholy-looking bed of rushes. They are not deep wells, nor springs proper, but a few *themáïl*, or shallow pits. The neighbourhood of our camp, being at the confluence of Wády el 'Ain, Wády Guseimeh, Wády es Serám, &c., was a large open space, interspersed with groups of low hills. The tops of the latter are covered with stone remains, but here present a new feature, pillars of stone accompanying the cairns and circles on the most prominent summits. An Arab of the Gudeirát tribe came up and abused us for stopping the rain! but at sunset the wind went down and a few drops fell, which entirely retrieved our character in his eyes.

Here also two caves form the principal object of attraction. There is one very fine one, about 43 feet long by 20 feet wide. It is apparently an old quarry, and has three large pillars supporting the roof, on the same plan as the Egyptian quarries. The roof has not been squared like the chamber walls, which would probably have been the case had it been intended for a dwelling. The second cave is merely a square cutting in the rock, without pillars. At the mouth of Wády el 'Ain the hill-sides are covered with paths and walls, and the bed of the wády has strongly-built dams thrown across it, and is filled with mezár'i, or sowing fields. The surrounding hills are covered with innumerable stone remains. The view from any of these hills is very fine, the outline of the Muweileh, Serám, and Gaseimeh mountains being rather more picturesque than usual, and the prospect sufficiently extensive to be even grand.

Crossing over by the caves to the mouth of Wády el 'Ain, we ascended a hill to enjoy the view and to sketch in some of the country round. This point being at the confluence of Wádies el 'Ain, Serám, Sabh, and Muweileh, there is a large open plain with scattered ranges of hills, but it does not (as the old maps make it) form a break in Jebel Magráh, nor does Wády el 'Ain itself come down *straight* from the heart of the mountain, but takes a curve round an outlying block. Wády el 'Ain has been erroneously represented on the maps as a broad plain, which, running into Wády Murreh on the east, divides the Southern

* Christians is the name given by the Bedawín to the former inhabitants of the country in which they dwell, for they regard themselves as conquerors or immigrants from the peninsula of Arabia proper.

or Azázimeh mountains from the Northern mountains of the Negeb. Without dwelling upon the slight geographical difficulty of making two valleys, undivided by a watershed, cut through a mountain plateau, I will merely repeat my former remark that the plateau of Jebel Magráh stretches without a break from immediately above Jebel 'Araif to Wády er Rakhmah. It is true that Wády el 'Ain, being a valley of much greater extent than any of those previously mentioned, makes a large gap in the outline of the range; and as it is here that we first find traces of cultivation and ancient habitation on any considerable scale, the natural limits of the "Negeb," or "Land of the South," may well be considered to begin at or near this point.

The 'Ain el Gudeirát is situated about two days up the valley, and consists of shallow pools. In Wády Dammáth, one of the wadies intervening between this and Wády Serám, we put up a flock of bustards, but did not succeed in getting a shot at them.

Three hours from our camp at Gaseimeh we reached Rás Serám, which we ascended. Here, as usual, we found an immense number of ruins (flat mounds, circles, and cairns) of the "stone period," covering the hills all around. At the base of the hill, too, were some pieces of cultivated ground like those at Wády el 'Ain, and two matamores (metámir), or pits for storing wheat, and near one of the latter was a threshing-floor. We camped in Wády Serám, where the sheikh came into our tent with a very grave face to say that the Arabs would not allow us to come near the ruins at Birein, as they were encamped close by them, and would, if necessary, prevent us by blows, adding that "they were terrible ruffians." We answered that any one who assaulted us would get a bullet through his head. "Then," said he, "they would kill us; we are only eight, and they have over a hundred guns." "Never mind," said we, "you know your brother is bound to carry on the blood feud if you are killed." As he had been for some time harping on the horrors of Birein and the Azázimeh Arabs, and had been sending emissaries with mysterious messages on to their camp, we shrewdly suspected that he had prepared a little row for our reception, in order to practise on our fears and extort a larger amount of money from us.

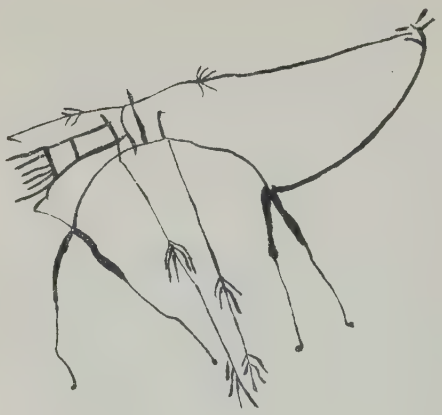
Early next morning we crossed the hills on the right hand of Wády Serám, and came down Wády Umm Ebteimeh into Wády Birein. The sheikh again pictured to us the horrors of going near the Arabs, but we insisted that it was all nonsense, as they dared not molest us through fear of a blood feud, and that, if they did, we would shoot the first man who touched us, and so involve him and them in a feud. At this he completely succumbed, and sent some one of the camel men forward to prepare for our reception. When we arrived at Birein we found plenty of Arabs encamped, but Suleimán changed his tone, and said, "Thank God, they are good fellows." Instead of molesting us, we found *them* in mortal terror of *us*, partly owing to the fact that (as we subsequently found) our men had been spreading about the report that

we were Turkish military officers. In Wády Umm Ebteimeh are terraces for cultivation and the ruins of one or two houses built of hewn stones. Turning into Wády Birein, a broad valley taking its rise in Jebel Magráh, we seemed to have moved suddenly into another and more fertile region. The broad valley was filled with verdure; grass, asphodel, and 'oshej grew in great profusion; flowers sprang beneath our feet; immense herds of cattle were going to and fro between us and the water (the wells), and large flocks of well-fed sheep and goats were pasturing upon the neighbouring hills. Large numbers of donkeys and some horses were also feeding there. We encamped under the shadow of a fine butmah-tree (a species of terebinth); there are nine of these in the valley, very old ones, and their gnarled trunks and spreading branches present an extremely picturesque appearance. The valley has been enclosed for purposes of cultivation, and the banked-up terraces (called by the Arabs "'ugum"), to stop the force and spread the waters of the seils over the cultivated ground in the wády bed, extend along its whole length. On the left-hand side, amidst ruins of houses and stone heaps, is a *dowár* (circle), larger than those of Biyár and Lussán, but of the same construction, and carefully built. A little lower down on the same promontory are the foundations of a square building and of a tower, but no traces could be discovered of any church or temple. Opposite the *dowár* are two deep wells, one of them dry, the other built in with very solid masonry, and surrounded with troughs for watering the flocks and herds. A man in a state of nature was always to be seen drawing water for the camels, hundreds of which at a time were crowding around to drink. When the camels had finished, the flocks came up, and it was a curious sight to see the sheep and goats taking their turns, a few goats going up and making way for a few sheep, and so on, until the whole flock had finished. A little farther on, on the same side, is the fiskíyeh, a large reservoir, with an aqueduct leading down to it from the wells. The well, which still yields good water, is about twenty-five feet deep. Besides the troughs there are circular trenches fenced round with stones for the cattle to drink from. The aqueduct is on the north-east side of the valley, it is well constructed and firmly cemented; the channel for the water is about eighteen inches wide and sixteen deep. It is built on huge blocks of stone to support it from below and give the proper level, and above it is a row of huge boulders to protect it from the falling *débris* and torrents. The fiskíyeh, or reservoir, is built of rather roughly dressed but squared stones in eight courses, the courses of masonry running with great regularity vertically as well as horizontally. It has been originally plastered over inside with hard cement, some of which still remains on the walls. Around the top of the walls is a path some eighteen inches wide, and above this are two more courses of masonry. The earth outside the tank has been piled up to within three feet of the top, and the remains of buttresses are still to be seen around it. From the hill above, the ruins of El 'Aujeh can be plainly seen. The heights

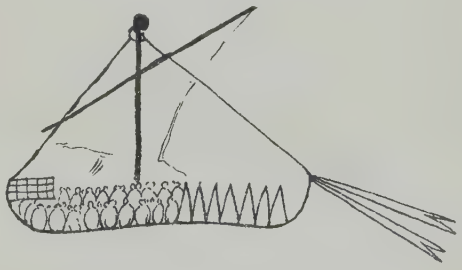
around are covered with cairns, some of which seem to have been dwellings, but they are so dilapidated that their nature and use cannot be easily discovered. By the wells are many traces of buildings and enclosures, and walls are seen in every direction. We spent the next day after our arrival in more carefully examining all the ruins, &c. While Mr. Drake was photographing and I myself sketching at the fiskíyeh, some of the bloodthirsty Arabs, against whom Suleimán had warned us, appeared in the shape of two little Arab children with topknots, who ran away screaming horribly with fright at the sight of us. An Arab lady watched the camera from a safe distance, evidently expecting it to go off. Our appearance, and the stories propagated by our worthy guides, seemed to have stricken terror into the hearts of the community. One old man whom we met asked me a variety of questions about the canal and about the Sultan, whose representatives he supposed us to be. It was some time, however, before he could be put at his ease. 'Eid, the sheikh of the Azázimeh, hung about the camp the greater part of the day, and was very civil. At Suleimán's request I smoked a pipe at the camp fire, and repeated to an admiring audience my denunciations of the infidels who believe that Christians either wish to stop the rain or have the power of doing so. At night Suleimán came to tell us that the other sheikh had demanded black mail, but we grumbled horribly, and declared that the Azázimeh were mere fellahín, or, instead of demanding money from us, they would have given us a sheep at the very least. We stayed here two days, and on February 14th struck camp and proceeded down Wády Birein, past the wells and ruins as far as the mouth of the wády and its junction with Wády Serám; the whole way was marked by signs of cultivation and fertility. As we were going along, one of the 'Azázimeh Arabs came up with a woman having a cutaneous disease, and besought us to give him some remedy. As we had nothing else by us, Mr. Drake wrote her a charm, and the old man received it with a profusion of thanks, regretting that he was too poor to be able to pay for it. At this juncture Selím appeared on the scene, having been sent to prevent us from talking too much with the natives, of whom our own rascals had tried to make us afraid. He asked us rather peremptorily what we were stopping for, and told us to come on. At this we both flew into a frantic rage, and made such a disturbance that Suleimán, to appease us, cursed Selím's father and mother (unnecessary, as I had already done so myself), and promised to beat him in the evening for his insolence. At a point a little below the junction of Wádies Serám and Birein, Wady Hanein comes in: this is a broad open valley, taking its rise in the heart of Jebel Magráh, and running down into Wády el Arish. This name Hanein has never before been breathed to European ears, the Arabs always speaking of it to strangers as Wády Hafír. The reason of this is that there exists an old tradition among them that "should a seil once come down Wády Hanein, there would be an end to all prosperity in the land." Hence the name is considered by them of evil omen, and by no means to be mentioned to Christians, people who are thought to possess such mysterious

influence over the rainfall. The tradition evidently dates from ancient times, and alludes to the admirable art with which the valley is dammed up, or rather laid out in terraces with strong embankments, which would make it simply impossible for any flood to rush through it, and would distribute the waters equally over the surface of the cultivated terraces, instead of allowing it to sweep unimpeded down to the sea, as in other valleys unprotected by such art. They might well, therefore, say that if a flood once came it would put an end to all prosperity, as it either could not come at all, or if it were strong enough to destroy the embankments, it must be such a deluge as would inevitably devastate the land. Perhaps the names 'Abdallah and 'Ali, which our Arabs had themselves given us, made them forget that we were not of the "faithful," and rendered them more confidential; but certain it is that the wády is called Hanein, as we had many opportunities of testing. In two hours and ten minutes from Birein we reached El 'Aujeh, where we encamped a little above the ruins. The principal building, viz., the fort and the church, stood upon the summit of a low hill or promontory round which sweeps Wády Hanein. Now all is desert, though the immense numbers of walls and terraces show how extensively cultivated the valley must once have been. Arab tradition, which calls Wády Hanein a "valley of gardens," is undoubtedly true, for many of those large, flat, strongly-embanked terraces must have been once planted with fruit trees, and others laid out in kitchen gardens, and this would still leave many miles for the cultivation of grain. At the south side of the hill on which the ruins stand is the ash-heap of the fort, on which are strewn great quantities of broken pottery and glass. Here, too, are a few ruins, apparently connected with the fort. To the east of the hill, and in the valley itself, are the ruins of the town, now little more than a confused heap of broken walls and half-buried foundations, but still of considerable extent. Amongst them we found a church, part of the apse still standing, and a few broken columns. There are also three wells, now dry, but one of them in a very perfect state, the top covering and wall which protected it still remaining entire. The Arabs call it *Bir es Sákiyeh*, "the well of the water-wheel," and the circular pavement whereon the animals turned the wheel is still visible. The black, flint-covered hill-slopes which surround the fort are covered with long rows of stones, which have been carefully swept together, and piled into numberless little black heaps. These at first considerably puzzled us, as they were evidently artificially made, and undoubtedly intended for some agricultural purpose, but we could not conceive what was planted on such dry and barren ground. Here again Arab tradition came to our aid, and the name *teleilát-el-'anab*, "grape mounds," solved the difficulty. These sunny slopes, if well tended, and with such supplies of water and agricultural appliances as the inhabitants of El 'Aujeh must have possessed, would have been admirably adapted to the growth of grapes, and the black flinty surface would radiate the solar heat, while these little mounds would allow the vines to trail along and would still keep

the bunches off the ground. I have before alluded to the importance and bearing of this discovery. A little above the ruins, on the western side of the valley, is a large cave or quarry, with wide pillars supporting the roof, an exaggerated edition of the one at Guseimeh. The light breaking into the cave at various intervals, and the jagged and massive appearance of the columns, give the place an extremely picturesque appearance. The dimensions are 265 feet by 95 feet. When in camp at night, after dinner, the sheikh began upbraiding Selím for his impertinence to us during the day, and stated his intention of beating him. Selím prayed for mercy, and then came a sound of thrashing, and loud lamentations from the victim. The whole thing was a farce, as the rascal Suleimán had no doubt himself sent Selím to prevent us from talking to the Azázimeh, and did this merely to clear himself when his plot had failed. The blows sounded suspiciously, as if given upon a camel saddle, but the moral effect was the same. Since the fiasco of Suleimán's lamentable attempts to frighten us, he had taken to a fawning, abject demeanour, that was almost as amusing as it was disgusting. The next two days (Feb. 14th and 15th) we stayed at El 'Aujeh, to examine the place more thoroughly. We first proceeded to the cave, where we sketched and photographed, and then visited the ruins on the hill, where we took measurements and made plans of the fort and church. The church is in better repair than the other building, some of the walls at the south-east corner measuring 23 feet 6 inches, and 8 feet inside, and the others being about 15 feet. Both the church and fort are built of squared and dressed stones, cemented by a light mortar almost like mud, and by no means so strong as that in the fiskíyeh and aqueduct in Wády Birein. The church is oblong, 122 feet by 48 feet, with three apses, that on the north side showing traces of a fresco, a Greek ϰ and some marks of paint being all that is now visible of it. On the south side is a smaller chapel, with a chamber behind, and there are two others at the west end. The partition walls are not more than two or three feet high. Many broken fragments of columns are lying about, with square capitals. The pillars are surrounded with rings, giving them the appearance of having been turned. There was no trace of ornamentation, except on two fragments of stone, which bore a simple quatrefoil pattern; nor could we discover traces of inscriptions in any of the ruins, either upon the hill or in the valley beneath; but there are some scratches of Greek letters, and in one place a rude drawing of a ship on a stone in the outer wall. The walls were originally plastered inside. The orientation is not exact, being 116°, or $3\frac{1}{2}$° S. of S.S.E. The fort is 272 feet by 107 feet, with remains of an arched entrance 14 feet wide. On the west side is a door, five feet wide, and a flight of steps leading from it down into the valley. At the east end is a large white wall, fifteen feet thick and about twenty-five feet high. This is the "castellated rock" of some travellers, who have only seen the ruins from afar *en passant;* in it are remains of beams, showing the height of the different stories. Beyond this is a circular well shallower and of much ruder



A camel. drawn by Sheikh Suleimán ibn Hamd ibn 'Ámir



El Aujeh. on E. wall of Church.

Over door of an inner cave at El Meshrifeh.

construction than the other wells, and not improbably a matamore or corn-cellar. Farther on are the foundations of a small tower, and at the extreme end a large well, thirty-five feet deep, of solid masonry, and forty-one feet deeper in the rock'; it is ten feet square. This and the three wells below amongst the ruins in the valley are all of precisely the same construction. They are square as far as the masonry extends, the corners having ledges or brackets of flat stones at distances of five feet, probably for cross-beams, or some method of descending into them. The tops are covered in by two arches, with a space of about thirty inches between, the whole being protected by a stout roof of concrete and rubble. This aperture was evidently made for the water-wheel, and the well worked like an ordinary Egyptian *sákiyeh*.

On February 16th we crossed Wády Hanein and the low hills on the other side, which were also covered with the "grape mounds" before alluded to. In one place we noticed remains of a reservoir and a large circular mound, probably the foundations of a wine-press. Descending into Wády Abu Rútheh, we camped early, as we had to send some distance for water. On our way to Sebáta (Esbaitah), and in the course of the afternoon, two of the Azázimeh came up, and at first saluted us most respectfully and quietly, but after an amicable cup of coffee, and while we were engaged in cooking our dinner, they suddenly got up and began to upbraid Suleimán for taking Christians to El 'Aujeh, and went off in a rage. The water to which we sent for our supply was called El Hasaineiyeh, and consists of a few *themáïl* only.

Having heard of a site called Esbaitá, we determined to visit it, and accordingly crossed the hills into Wády el Abyadh with that intention. Here Suleimán came up, and expatiated upon the danger of the attempt, begging us to go by the regular road to Rehaibeh instead. Seeing that we were determined to follow our original plan, he came on, though in a very ill temper, and in two hours from camp we reached Wády Sideríyeh, where we pitched our tent. Staying only a few minutes to eat a piece of bread, we crossed the hills that form the head of the wády, and in about ten minutes found ourselves at a ruined fort called (probably from its commanding position) El Meshrifeh. The fort consists of a walled enclosure on the top of a hill, protected by three large towers on the southern side, one on the eastern, and one on the western, with a series of escarpments and bastions on the southern or precipitous side, extending right down into the wády bed. The rocks immediately beneath the summit, and behind the first lower tier of escarpments, are excavated into a series of caves, which formed chambers with the masonry of the fortification itself. The most westerly of these is of a ruder construction, and is walled in, in front, with large unhewn stones, and appears to be of a much earlier date. A little farther on is one whic has the end cut into the form of an apse, and, although very low, looks like a small chapel. The masonry throughout is very solid and compact, some of the hewn blocks of stone being of immense size. At the lower part of the escarpments are traces of an earlier and

ruder masonry, over which the present structure is raised. The walls are strongly built, for the most part of unhewn stones, except the western one, which had several loopholes still visible in it, and the remains of a large doorway. In the centre is a building about 40ft. square, with three chambers at the west end and a larger open space at the eastern. In front of this are three circles carefully built round with upright stones, and sunk a little below the surface. They lead one into the other, and measure severally 50ft., 25ft., and 12ft. in diameter, the last one being composed of small stones merely piled round. The walls of the building and of the church which still remain are from 10ft. to 12ft. high. The towers are of a peculiar construction, being built with very thick walls, and in a series of tiers, with "pigeon-holes" about 3½ft. high; the front of one has fallen down, showing the section. The chambers in the towers were also strengthened by arches, one of which is still visible and in a good state of preservation. The church within the enclosure measures 40ft. by 20ft., has a semicircular apse at the east end, and a side chapel on the south, the plan being the same as that at of El 'Aujeh. The view from the top of the wall is very fine and commanding. Wády el Abyadh, some miles broad, and extending to the base of Jebel Magráh, sweeps in a semicircle round the hill on which the fort stands. It is not laid out in terraces like Wády Hanein, but there are many vestiges of agriculture, especially on the more elevated portions, every one of which has been taken advantage of for the cultivation, it would seem, of vines, as the same ridges and furrows, the *teleilát-el-'anab* which we noticed at El 'Aujeh, are seen upon them. The surrounding and opposite hills have many *'ugúm* (walled enclosures for cultivation) on them. About three miles and a half to the south is seen Es Sebaita itself, which is a town of considerable size. Wády es Sideriyeh, in which we were encamped, also contains some ruins which resemble wine-presses, and every little gully is also carefully embanked and built up with rude masonry. The hills are covered with paths at very regular intervals from top to bottom, and these we conjectured may have been vine-terraces, though some are no doubt due to the nature of the limestone, the regular strata of which often wears away into similar shapes.

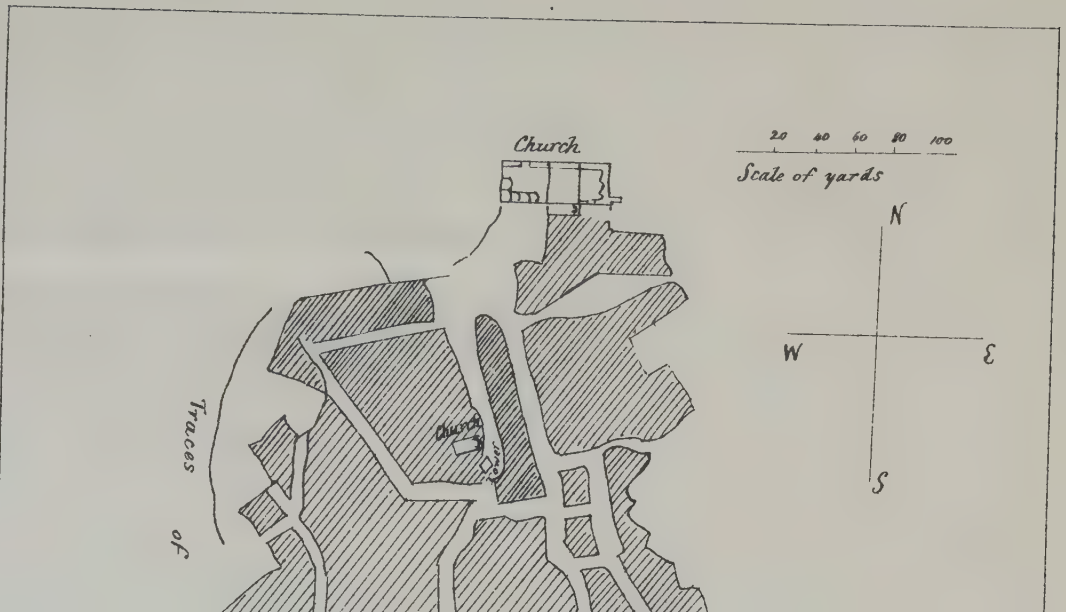
On February 17th we made an early start, and, leaving the camels to follow after us, started off with Suleimán, and crossing over the hills at the head of Wády Sideríyeh, descended into Wády el Abyadh, and made our way across to Sebaitá. On our way we passed several deserted vineyards and gardens, and one or two ruined buildings, probably either wine-presses or storehouses. In an hour we reached the ruined town, and at once prepared to take our photographs and make plans, as the sheikh was very anxious for us to get it done before any of the Arabs of the place came up. He seemed to-day really apprehensive of meeting them, and as soon as we had entered the ruins he made a hurried inspection of them to assure himself that no stray Bedawí was lurking there with mischievous intent, after which he

posted himself upon the apse of the church, and kept an anxious look-out until the camels came in sight. The men, when they did come up, camped in a secluded hollow, and would not set up the tent till sunset.

Sebaitá is situated in the Magráh el Esbaitá, which takes its rise in the mountain of that name, and drains into Wády el Abyadh. The ruins are by far the most imposing and considerable of any which we had seen, and the Arabs themselves say, "*A'azem min el 'Aujeh wa el 'Abdeh má fi, illa Esbaitá a'azem minhumá*," "There is nothing larger (or grander) than 'Aujeh and 'Abdeh, except Esbaitá, which is grander than either." They have also a tradition that there was once a war between the people of El Meshrifeh (the fort which we had visited the day before) and those of Esbaitá, in which the latter were victorious, as they were superior in numbers and wealth. Their gardens (which may still be seen in large numbers around the city) were fruitful and well-kept, and the hills all around were covered with orchards of apples and pomegranates, and terraces of clustering vines. The ruins, as they now stand, consist of a city about 500 yards long, and from 200 to 300 yards wide; it lies north and south, bending round towards a branch of Wady el Abyadh. The town is very strongly and compactly built, and contains three churches, a tower, and two fiskíyehs, or reservoirs for water. The houses are built of stone, generally square-hewn but undressed blocks at the bottom, and smoothed dressed stones in the upper parts. No timber beams are used in their construction (probably because wood must always have been scarce in the country, even in the time of its fertility), but the want is most skilfully supplied, all the lower stories being built with arches about three feet apart and two feet wide, long thick beams of stone being placed across them to form the roofs (see plate, p. 20). There are numerous wells about two feet in diameter, and generally covered with a square stone block, having a hole cut in it, not unlike the coal-cellar traps in English pavements. Nearly every house has its well, and they are also conveniently placed in all the corners of the public places. The streets are still plainly to be traced, although the level of the soil has been considerably heightened by the fallen *débris* and rubbish. The outer buildings are either walled in or strengthened with additional masonry, and present a series of angles like a fortification. There are also traces of an older and very thick wall surrounding the town. The churches are: first, the great church at the north end of the town; this is of the same pattern as those at El 'Aujeh and El Meshrifeh, having three apses and a side chapel. It measures forty-nine by twenty-one yards inside, but nearly half of this length is taken up by a building apparently subsequently attached to it. From the appearance of this, and the other buildings immediately adjoining it on the south side, we came to the conclusion that there must have been a monastery connected with the church. The walls are of considerable height, the centre apse standing some thirty feet; they have been strengthened at a later period by rude but massive masonry, built up in a slope against the original wall, which plan is also observable in the other buildings in the town, which,

like the church, are more exposed than usual, from their proximity to the outer walls. The other two churches are situated more in the centre of the town, and are of smaller dimensions, measuring sixty-six by forty-seven feet each. In the apse of the more northern one is some rude paint ornamentation still visible upon a small arched niche in the centre, and also some vestige of a fresco. The tower stands a little south of the last-mentioned church; it is about twenty feet square, and the stories (like those at El Meshrifeh) are built with the stone arches just described. The fiskíyehs are two irregular-shaped reservoirs, with a flight of steps leading down into them. On the side of the tower is a small arched doorway, having a rude sculptured ornamentation over it, consisting of three circles, with crosses between, and surmounted by an urn, from which a palm-tree is growing, supported by a lion rampant and a griffin, which stand upon the handles. This, too, shows traces of having been covered with red and blue paint. There was no other ornamentation to be seen or discovered about the place, except a few fragments of stone, with the same simple star or quatrefoil pattern which we found at El 'Aujeh, and fragments of columns which we noticed had the same rude turning lines which we remarked at the latter place. No inscriptions of any kind were to be found. The houses are all of one type, small arched chambers with niches here and there, and a little courtyard. In one of the niches was a cross, rudely chipped out in the side. Many of the walls stand from twenty to twenty-five feet high. After completing our photographs and plans, we took a stroll through the town to impress its features more thoroughly on our memories; the perfect stillness and utter desolation were very striking and impressive. On reaching camp the Arabs had just seated themselves comfortably to eat a morsel of bread, when a shriek resounded through the valley, and they all seized their guns, those who had none borrowing ours, and rushed off, thinking that some of the 'Azázimeh had made off with the camels. Shortly afterwards they returned in high spirits with Selím, who had shot a gazelle, the cause of all the excitement being that he was shouting to find camp. In a few minutes the creature was in the pot boiling.

The name Sebaitá at once suggests the Zephath of the Bible. Zephath signifies a watch-tower; and it is a noteworthy fact that the fortress of El Meshrifeh, discovered by us in the same neighbourhood, exactly corresponds to this both in its position and in the meaning of the name. I would make one more suggestion respecting this site: Zephath has always been considered as identical with Hormah; and in Judges i. 17 it is thus spoken of: "And Judah went with Simeon his brother, and they slew the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. And the name of the city was called Hormah." May we not understand the word "Zephath" in its proper signification, and consider "the city," after all, as separate from the tower or fortress thus attacked and destroyed? The city, which was protected by so commanding a fort, might well be spoken of as the City of the Tower; and, as so important a position would not be likely to be neglected by later inhabitants of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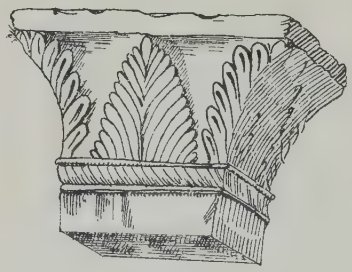
Plan of the town of S^t baita.

the land, I think it not improbable that in El Meshrifeh we see the site of Zephath itself, and in Sebaitá that of the city of the "Zephath," to which the Israelites, after their victory, gave the name of Hormah.

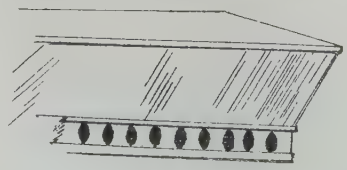
Proceeding along the Magráh es S'baitá for three hours in a north-easterly direction, we came to a small wády in the low sand hills, where our sheikh had been told that we should find water. Here we halted, intending, if possible, to get on towards Ruheibeh the same night after filling the skins, but there were so many of the Arabs of the neighbourhood at the pools that a delay occurred, and we were obliged to camp. The water is found in three little pools (*themáil*), and these are only filled from the *seils*, not perennial springs. Vineyards and gardens, with here and there strong buildings in the midst, were visible in great numbers immediately after leaving es S'beitá; but in about an hour and a half all traces of cultivation ceased. While waiting for water we ascended one of the neighbouring sand hills to look out for Ruheibeh, and noticed through the glasses a string of camels in the distance upon the regular road, some of them having riders whom we conjectured to be European travellers. An old Arab, a friend of Suleimán's, came up to our tent with a negro slave—an ugly, stupid looking lump of niggerdom whom he wished to sell for £10. The water where we were stopping was called Themáil et T'ráshed. Near this point Wády Dheigat el 'Amerín comes into the plain from the Magráh.

Walking for some hours over the hills, at the back of our camp, and across a broad valley called Wády ed Dhaba'í, we came to a white mound in which was a cave 34ft by 51ft., with chambers round it, which had evidently been used as a place of sepulture. Up to this point we had not met with any vestiges of cultivation since leaving the Magráh, the hills being all covered with drift-sand brought (as the appearance of the bushes showed) from the west. Passing the cave, however, the familiar *'ugúm* and embankments again became visible in the wády beds, and numerous ruins, as of country and garden houses, were scattered over the hill tops. One of these was of considerable extent, consisting of two blocks of buildings, altogether about 100ft. long. Amongst the ruins was a broken capital with a simple but well-carved Corinthian pattern upon it. Half an hour further on to the west were the ruins of a city, some caves, and an old well, with immensely massive masonry, pointing to a very ancient date. Reserving our description of this place for a more thorough investigation, the next day we went on to camp, which was pitched in Wády er Ruheibeh, and then taking the photographic instruments with us, we proceeded to some other ruins which were situated a few miles from our tents. On our way we put up a herd of gazelles, one of which Suleimán succeeded in bringing down. In the evening we were visited by a Bedawí poet, who recited some very fair verses of his own over the camp fire, and also repeated some poems of the celebrated East of Jordan Chief, Nimr el 'Adwán.

A strong hot wind getting up early the next morning (February 21),



Capital near Sadr.



At Khalasah.

ceiling, as though to drain the roof. It is strongly built, and the inside chambers have been plastered over, while here and there brick is used in the interior construction. The place where the well is said to have existed is marked by a piece of fallen masonry which looks like a roof, and is well put together with flat brick-shaped stones and cement. The larger inner chamber has arched niches on either side. There is no other well than this in the Wády Ruheibeh itself, but on the sloping sides of Wády el Bir, in which these ruins are situated, are numerous wells, reservoirs, and cisterns. Each of the wells has a large square stone placed over it with a circular hole for the mouth. The cisterns are partly built of masonry and partly cut in the solid rock—one which we examined was about 40ft. square—but all of these are now either dry or filled up with *débris*. Below the well-building are the remains of what, from its situation, (lying east and west,) we concluded might have been a church; and just below the town itself is a large fiskíyeh, or reservoir, also half composed of masonry and half cut in the solid rock. Walls, *'ugúm*, and other traces of cultivation, are abundant in the neighbourhood. A little beyond this the wády opens out and receives the name of Bahr bela mi (the waterless sea), and on the left comes in a small valley called Shutnet er Ruheibeh, no doubt the *Sitnah* of the Bible.

On February 22nd, we proceeded up Wády Ruheibeh for twenty minutes, and then for an hour and forty minutes further over low hills (at first by one or two little valleys, or Raudh, called, also, Shutneh) on to Khalasah. The ruins are situated in Wády Aslúj, though below the city the valley takes the name of the town. There is no such name in the neighbourhood of the ruins as Wády el Kurn, or Kurm, which is given to it by Robinson. The ruins are extensive, but so utterly destroyed that it is impossible to make out what the original ground-plan might have been, though the course of one broad street can still be traced. The inhabitants of Gaza are in the habit of removing the stones for building purposes, and have thus nearly cleared the site, in many cases actually digging out the foundations of the houses. There is a well with good but rather brackish water, to the south-west of the town. Another circular well, now blocked up, is also found in the wády bed, and on the hill-side a little above it are the foundations of a building with a large cistern covered in with strong masonry, and having had originally a flat roof like that at Ruheibeh. In one of the ruined sites in the town itself, we found fragments of a marble entablature ornamented with a rude sculptured pattern.

Leaving Khalasah amidst a thick haze, which entirely obscured the horizon, and with a sharp storm of dust blowing in our faces, we crossed the Rumeil et Hámid, a series of rolling hills covered with drift sand. In two hours and a quarter we reached Wády Martabeh, and on the hills which divide this from the small Wády Khazáli (which falls into it a little lower down) we found remains of a building and a reservoir, which we conjectured to be a station on the old Roman road to 'Akabah, for

near it is a road which, Suleimán told us, leads to the water of Martabeh a little lower down, and another going up the wády into Jebel Rakhmah, and joining the road to 'Abdeh, which crosses Wádies Martabeh and 'Aslúj. Twenty minutes further we turned into a small wády leading into Wády Seb'a. The distance was altogether four hours' journey for us and six for the camels. At first the camels were, as usual, making a detour, so that we should occupy two days instead of one in getting to Beersheba, but as we had nothing to gain on this occasion by going out of our way, we protested and brought up all the long series of similar tricks; the sheikh pushed on and we reached Bir Seb'a about an hour before sunset. Our first impressions of Beersheba were anything but favourable. We found it presenting an aspect far different to that described by previous travellers; for such had been the severity of the recent drought, that the herbage was entirely burnt up, and in place of rich pasturages there was nothing but a dry, parched valley, bare and desolate as the desert itself. This state of things had compelled the Bedawín to move off with their flocks and herds to more fertile spots, and we were therefore unable to find camels to take us back into the mountains without going up to Hebron, as our Arabs dare not venture so far beyond their own borders. In the morning a shower of rain fell and prevented us from leaving the tent until eleven o'clock, when we visited the ruins and wells while the camels were loading. Two of the wells are filled with water, and one is dry: they are built of fine solid masonry and are in a tolerably perfect condition. In the immediate neighbourhood are also traces of the other four wells which undoubtedly once existed there, and the Arab tradition informs us that "The Beni Murr dwelt by seven wells (Seb'a Biyúr), each well had seven tanks, each tank had seven troughs, and each trough had seven horses drinking thereat." The opposite (southern) side of the valley bed is banked up with a stout wall of ancient masonry to prevent its falling in. This wall extends only for a few hundred yards along the part immediately opposite the wells. The hill-side immediately behind them is covered with ruins, but the stones have been so entirely removed or destroyed that nothing now is left but the foundations, and these are so confused that very little can be made out as to their original plan. A little higher up the wády, and just above the easternmost well (the dry one), the ground-plan of a perfect Greek church, with a semicircular apse, can be plainly distinguished; the foundations are, however, quite level with the soil. In the sites of the buried wells, or what we took to be such, are the remains of a trough or cistern composed of layers of stones embedded in concrete. This form of masonry may be also observed in some of the other foundations.

The country around consists of a rolling plain or down intersected by the wády beds of Es Seb'a and Khalíl, and would, no doubt, be very pretty, as a contrast to the desert which we have just passed through, were there any verdure or herbage upon it; as it is, there is absolutely nothing to relieve the eye. In other years, the Arabs tell us, it is covered for

miles around with grass, flowers, and herbage, up to the knees; but last year there had been so little rain that nothing would grow. At one o'clock we left Beersheba, and turned off to the left of the hills which divide Wády es Seb'a from Wády el Khalíl, (or rather at the point where they diverge,) and keeping near the bed of the latter wády, we proceeded towards the ruins of El Haurá, where we were to have encamped. At about four o'clock we reached a hill with some stone heaps and remains of rude walls upon it, and at its base some *metámír*, or granary pits. Here we were joined by our camel men, who came up in a state of great excitement, and after some prevarication told us that the place in which we had halted was not Haurá, but pointed to some hills about an hour off as the real site. Suleimán declared that some Arabs whom we had just met had informed him that the Gaisíyeh, who dwell in the vicinity, had already commenced hostilities against them two days before, and that if we went there it would be at the peril of our lives. Under these circumstances, he implored us to camp where we were, and to go straight on to Dhahaníyeh the next morning. Finding that we took the news very coolly, and laughed at his real or assumed terrors, he at last professed himself ready to make a flying visit with us, but begged us to go well armed. We at once assented, when he made a final appeal and painted in glowing colours the risk to which we were exposing ourselves. "*Yellah*," we replied, "cut along!" and with fervent ejaculations for protection from Allah, he started off, and we walked quickly over the plain for nearly an hour, (rather fatiguing work after a hard day,) and a little before sunset reached the hills on which the ruins stand. First, we visited the cave mentioned by Dr. Tristram, which, although it still retained traces of moisture, did not then contain any water. What are described in the "Land of Israel" as two tunnels are merely the arched tops of the cave formed by the pillar which supports the roof, and which, if the water covered the pillar itself, would have the appearance of tunnels. On the right side is another such arch, but the mud is so deep that it is impossible to say how far down or back it goes. There are many other caves, which have been built up or excavated to form reservoirs, and one large excavation exists with a circular opening like those at El 'Aujeh and Khalasah. There are also a great many wells. They all appear to have a communication with a system of cisterns or reservoirs undermining the hills. The place might well be called the city of cisterns, and the name Haurá, indeed, has some such primary meaning. The ruins themselves cover the crest of a long triple hill, and are of considerable extent. The houses are formed of immense blocks of flint conglomerate, many of them measuring 6ft. by 4ft. by 2ft. The squarest have been picked out and built in like huge hewn stones or bricks. The houses are about 30ft. by 20ft., and generally consist of a single chamber. One large building has the appearance of a temple. Fine lines of walls, wells (one with a piece of limestone masonry and a cornice still remaining), and a concrete trough, are to be seen; and the hills around are also covered with ruins. In the distance, at an angle of 85°, were the ruins of Sa'áwí. The flinty

blocks, not being exposed in these latitudes to their only enemy, severe frosts, may have defied time and the elements for ages, and seem likely to do so still. We met none of the formidable Arabs mentioned above, for which mercy Suleimán and Selím, who had also accompanied us, returned most pious thanks to Providence, and we got back to camp by dark. We subsequently learnt that the statement of the Arabs was true, and Suleimán's fears not unfounded.

That day (February 24) we entered Palestine and left the desert region of the South Country, but there was little to remind us of the fact except that the brown mould beneath our feet was hard with the fibre of dried vegetation, that the hills and plains showed traces of the plough, and that in the wády beds an occasional streak of refreshing green grass might be observed. We noticed a large flock of pigeons and a flight of cranes, as well as four gazelles browsing in the distance. Cattle and flocks there were none, for the drought this year has driven all the Arabs far from the pasture lands of Beersheba.

The next morning we walked over the rolling country, through which Wády el Khalíl runs, and passed on our way many wells, cisterns, and other indications of former fertility and habitation, which, even with the present drought, was sufficiently marked to present a striking contrast to the desert which we had left. At the end of the hour and a half we came to some ancient ruins called Dátraiyeh, situated on one of the hills which form the entrance to Palestine proper. They consisted of walls and houses of solid masonry, some of the stones employed in their construction being of immense size. The basements are for the most part built on arches sómewhat after the style of architecture prevalent at S'ebitá. There are numerous wells about the city, most of them apparently connected with a large system of excavated reservoirs on the hill-side. Leaving this place we crossed over a small mountain pass and found ourselves in Wády Dhaharíyeh. Here the hills were covered with vegetation, and the bállúteh, or dwarf oak, began to appear. The valley itself is banked up with strong walls, 'ugúm, and terraces, which have evidently been kept up from ancient times, as the hill-sides and places where there is now no cultivation are covered with them. In three hours and a-half from camp we reached the village of Ed Dhaharíyeh, which is situated on a hill, at a point where the wády widens out, and is surrounded with fields and cultivation. At the foot of the hill are two fine olive-trees, by one of which we pitched our tent. Ed Dhaharíyeh, at the first glance, or to the traveller who merely passes by and does not venture into the village itself, presents nothing to distinguish it from an ordinary Arab village, and may seem to confirm the remark given in "Murray," that "there is nothing of interest there to detain the pilgrim." But on ascending the hill we found it, on the contrary, a most interesting place. The dwellings consist principally of caves in the natural rock, some of them with rude arches carved over the doorways, and all of them of the greatest antiquity. The spots selected for their excavations are small terraces on the hill-side, and these are walled

round with mud fences, and form a sort of court-yard in front of the cave itself, in which dogs, goats, chickens, children, and other members of the family take the air. They are exactly like what the old Horite dwellings must have been, and have no doubt been inhabited by generation after generation since the days of that now forgotten race. The village is evidently an ancient site; and in the centre is the basement of a building of massive masonry containing three arched apartments. Entering these we were immediately covered with fleas, shaking and brushing them by *hundreds* from our arms, legs, and clothing. Old arches and other remains of antiquity appear at every corner. We went into one which is now used as a coffee-shop by the fellahín inhabiting the place. We were very well received by the Moslem population, who, though thieves and scoundrels, are a cheery set, and gave and received "chaff" in the most good-humoured manner. As we walked through, women (who, strange to say, are here all unveiled and all ugly) rushed out of the caves and screamed in excited and angry tones "*bádh djá-á-j!*" The unlearned might have taken this for abuse, and beat a hasty retreat from the apparently frantic amazons, but we knew that the words merely meant that they had eggs and chickens to sell. The evening was consumed in settling with Sheikh Suleimán, who went away positively content with his bakhshísh, though, true to his Arab character, he begged for a series of small articles to the last.

We rested at Dhaharíyeh for the night; and in the morning, after a long squabble with the head men of the place, we were compelled to submit, under protest, to the imposition of paying two mejídis a-piece for four camels, and began to strike our tent and pack up for ourselves. Some time after noon we got off, but owing to the laziness and constant stopping of the fellahín who came with us, we did not get into Khalíl until past sunset. We camped over against the Quarantine, and after abusing our fellahín soundly for robbing us of a crowbar, and trying to steal a rope, we made a *mag'ad* (*i.e.*, semicircular shelter) of the boxes, and prepared to pass the night Arab fashion, *sub Jove*, one of us always keeping on the watch. But the Mudír, a good-humoured old effendi who rules the quarantine, would not hear of it, and very politely insisted upon our coming into the building itself, where he gave us a room to ourselves, and sent us up a dinner of rice mixed up with oil and onions, together with some bread and *dibs*, or syrup of raisins. This the effendi went through the show of preparing with his own hands, and we being both hungry and tired, ate it with relish and turned in. At a little after seven in the morning we awoke, and could at first hardly realise the fact that we were in an inhabited place, but having made a simple toilet we turned out upon the terrace in front of our room and gazed upon the city of Ibráhím el Khalíl. It is an irregular white town, much such a place as S'beitá must have been before it fell into ruins. On the east side, and at the highest point, is the Haram, a Christian church with a minaret added to turn it into a mosque, not a particularly imposing sight in itself, but of the deepest interest, as being beyond all

question the very spot in which the Patriarch Abraham is buried—nay, more, it is almost certain that his very bones lie in the mysterious cave of Machpelah, beneath the pavement of the building. The town occupies the eastern side of a dip in the hills of Judah, the bottom, or valley, being a grassy expanse, the greater part of which is occupied by the cemetery. After a cup of coffee with the effendi at the gate of the quarantine, where we had passed the night, we sallied forth into the town, accompanied by one of the servants of the establishment, and took a hasty glance round the Haram from the outside, walked through the streets and bazaars, and returned to our own quarters to breakfast.

By four o'clock the next day we were in Jerusalem. Our journey had been a most interesting one, though not without its anxieties and risks. The Arabs were very different from the "gentle Towarah," and it was no easy task to overcome their prejudices and their fears, and to extract from them the information which we required.

The whole of the journey—nearly 600 miles—from Suez to Jerusalem was performed on foot, and as we had no servants, everything devolved upon ourselves. This, with the route-sketching, making plans, and other work, left us but little time; and although Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake, in addition to his own investigations, devoted himself with great energy to assisting in the other objects of the expedition, yet we seldom worked less than from fourteen to sixteen hours in the day. Strange to say, we did not find a single inscription in the country, if we except the Arab tribe marks, which have, many of them, considerable archæological and historical interest. I commenced a collection of them last winter in Sinai, and am now preparing a complete account of them, with their history and origin.

As I have much to say about the Holy City, and of the Haram and its inscriptions, I shall reserve this part of my report for the next number of the *Quarterly Statement*, when I hope to give the results of my own investigations here and in other parts of Palestine, as well as an account of the Holy City and the Temple Area, taken from some Arabic books and manuscripts which are now in my hands.

Having procured the necessary provisions for the trip, and exchanged our tent for a much smaller one, we left Jerusalem amidst a violent storm of wind and rain, and returned to Hebron. On March 22nd the old sheikh Hamzeh, with whom we had previously made arrangements for the journey, came to say that the camels had arrived, but it was then so wet and stormy a day that we could not start. The old fellow begged without success for several articles, such as a kefíyeh, &c., and began to make difficulties about going to several places, but as we threatened to dismiss him at once if any difficulty occurred, and treat for ourselves with the sheikh of the place, he gave in, and promised to go wherever we chose. Some of the Jehalín Arabs who were to take us made their appearance, and one old fellow named 'Eisá came up and tried to learn from us the amount of hire we had promised to the sheikh for each camel, but without success. At last, by way of "chaffing" him, I said,

"How much will you give me to tell you?" which observation he took quite seriously, and went off in disgust. We also received a visit from our host the effendi, or Mudír, of the quarantine establishment.

At sunrise on March 23rd we were up and had scarcely done breakfast when old Hamzeh brought the camels, and, wonderful to relate, we got all the loads and the Abyssinian boy, whom we had engaged as a help, upon the four beasts for which we had agreed without any trouble or disturbance. By nine or half-past we were on our way, and had left the towers of Machpelah behind us. It was still very wet and stormy, and the wind, as it blew bitterly cold across the hills of Judah, made our walk anything but a pleasant one. In about an hour and forty-five minutes we passed a ruined town on a hill to the left, called Khirbet Abu Hamám, where a round tower in a fair state of preservation was the only noticeable feature. At a turn in the wády immediately after this were some caves, one of them, without sepulchral loculi, but with two rude pillars in front, looked as if it might have been used as a habitation. Twenty minutes further on, in Wády Khashebeh, we came to another ruin called Tell Zîf, and twenty minutes further still to Khirbet el Weibedeh, in Wády Burúk. Forty minutes from this we found a still larger ruin, situated in a very rocky valley, and called Towáneh. Proceeding for another hour in a southern direction, we reached Wády Sebbeh, and turned off towards the camp of our Arabs (the Jehalín), amongst whom we pitched our tents for the night. The wind was blowing a hurricane, and a cold rain was falling at intervals. The Jehalín Arabs were encamped with about forty tents; this tribe seems to have been much maligned by travellers, for they are quite as intelligent as the average Bedawín, and the four that we had with us were willing and active fellows enough. They are quite as tractable and good-tempered as the Towarah, and quite as poor, if external appearances are to be trusted. They have a feud with the 'Adwán, and dared not promise to take us farther than Wády Músa. An hour and ten minutes past Wády Ehdeibeh brought us to Tell 'Arád, which is nothing now but a large white mound. Turning a little out of our road for nearly two hours, we came to Keseifeh, a considerable ruin extending along the ridge of a hill. The buildings were all too dilapidated to be distinguished very readily, but there was a small church with a circular apse and two monolithic columns standing, one whole and one broken, and several others were lying about. We found also traces of tesselated pavement made of square, coloured "dice" of stones like a mosaic. Another hour brought us to Tell Milh, the site of the ancient Moladah. Here are two wells of fine masonry at the foot of the hill, one of them dry and the other containing good water, surrounded with marble troughs like those at Bir Sebá. The tradition of the Arabs is that Abraham used to water his flocks here as well as at Beersheba, and that he it was who dug the wells. His dogs are said to have worn collars of gold. The lower hills to the right of the tell are covered with ruins, too dilapidated, however, for any plan of the city to be discovered; but from the traces of walls and

foundations which lie all about, it must have been of considerable extent. We camped in Wády Gabáb es Sháwarí, so called from two *gabáb*, or domes, situated about three-quarters of a mile to the east of our camp. The next day (March 25th) we stayed in camp for a little rest, and about nine o'clock went over to the ruins El Gabáb, which seem to be the remains of an old Mohammedan cemetery. The larger building is a tomb of the ordinary pattern, open, with an arch facing each way, and covered with a dome. The smaller building would seem to be a welí, or saint's tomb. The walls inside and out are covered with Arab tribe marks, and various old tombs lie scattered round it. Our little camp was visited by parties of the 'Azázimeh and Dhallám Arabs; the former "hoped we would not stop in their country longer than we could help, but would visit what places we required, and depart out of their coasts." They were the first Bedawín we have seen in these parts who carried spears.

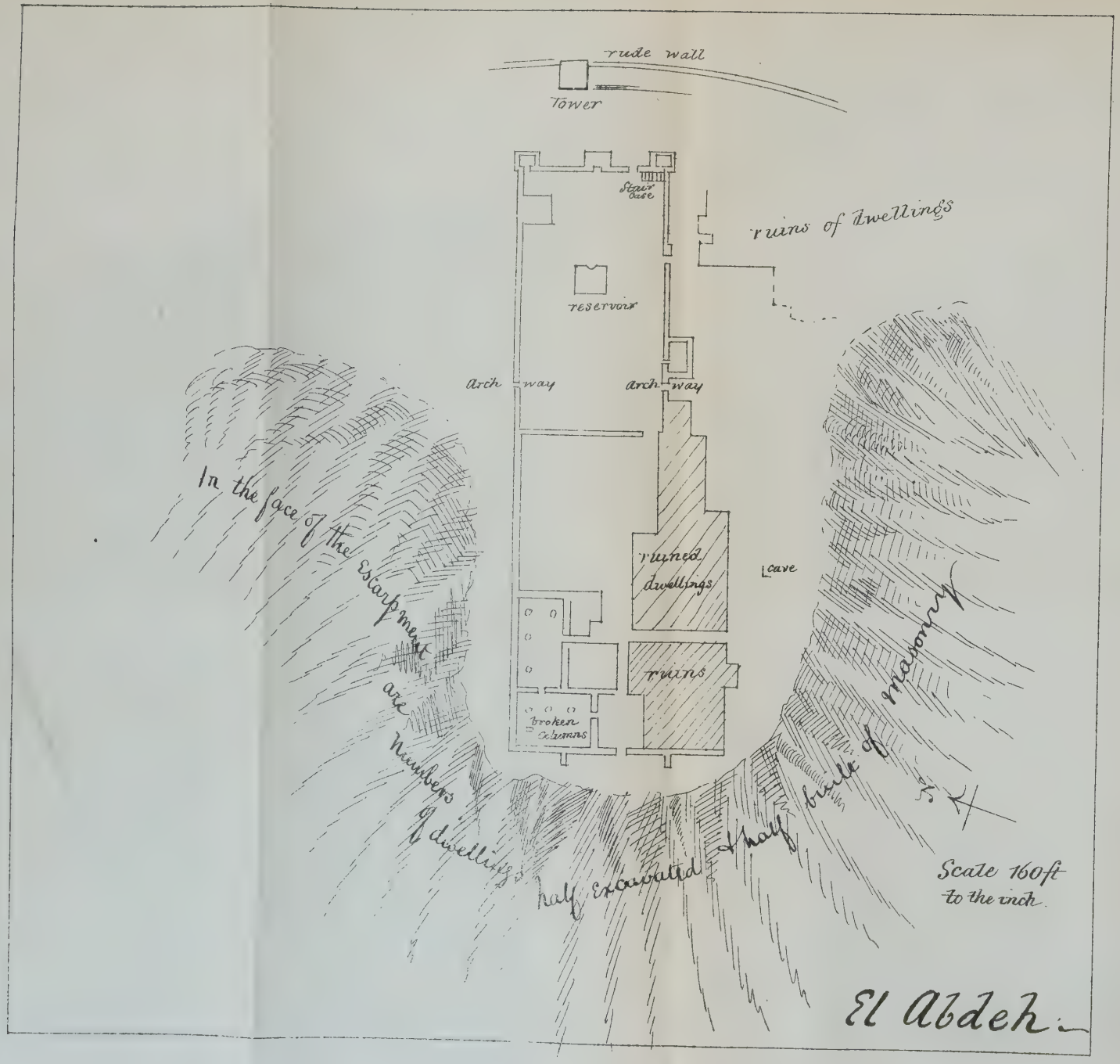
After a good night's rest we rose at sunrise, and got off by eight o'clock. We crossed a broad rolling plain called Johl el Ghûleh, and in an hour and a half reached Wády 'Ararah (Aroer), where the only relics of the ancient city are a few wells, two or three of them built up with rude masonry, and some of them containing water. Wády 'Ararah heads in the neighbouring mountains, called El Menjel, in a cleft (*thilmeh*), the wady on the other side being called Es Sirr, where there are also said to be some ruins. A walk of some two hours over another rolling plain, called Er Rumail (the sands or downs), brought us to Rás Wády Abu Taráfí, erroneously placed on the maps, and there called Rás Abu Teraibeh. At this place we killed a large snake. From Rás Abu Taráfí we proceeded for fifty minutes in a south-westerly direction, and came to some ruins, probably a station on an old Roman road to 'Abdeh. About an hour more brought us to Wády 'Aslúj, and in another we had crossed over into Wády Rakhameh, where we found wells and the remains of a town, but so much dilapidated and buried as to be scarcely visible above the soil. Near this we camped, having had a quarrel with old Hamzeh about camping and carrying water. On making it up he waxed very communicative, and told us of the wars of the Arabs; it seems that when Hamzeh was a boy (he puts it at forty years, but it must be much more), the Ma'ázeh from Arabia proper and the Arabs of Gaza invaded this part of the country for the sake of the pasturage, whereupon the Gaisíyeh, Jehalín, 'Azázimeh, Arabs of Khalíl, Terabín, and Teyáhah assembled against them and expelled them from the country. A great battle was fought near Abu Tulúl by our camp of the night before, when more than eight hundred men fell, and one hundred and fifty horses were killed. The 'Azázimeh and the Arabs of Kerak have a feud, and mutually make raids upon each other's territory.

Turning out of Wády Rakhameh, we walked for sixty-five minutes over El Magráh, a broad depression in the mountains which receives the torrents of many small ravines. At the end of this was a small nagb (or pass), with some large cairns and a few graves on the watershed; this took us on to a sloping plain, not unlike that of Er Ráhah in Sinai, and bounded

by two low ranges of mountains on either side, from which it receives the name of El Jebail. Here we were fairly inside the mysterious Jebel Magráh, and the white cliffs of the higher range at the head of Wády Marreh, Wády Abyedh, &c., were seen at the end of the vista. In the course of our walk thus far we had come across frequent traces of the same old caravan road which we had noticed at the station in Wády Abu Taráfí, and at twenty-five minutes along El Jebail we found the ruins of a small building called Heddet Emhannah. In fifty-five minutes we had left this plain and turned into Wády el Baggár, which flows over another plain of much greater extent, and into the Dheigat el 'Amirín to the right. The view as we crossed this latter plain was more picturesque than those we have lately been accustomed to, some of the outlines of the mountains being rather fine, and the cliffs of Wády Marreh decidedly precipitous. On the plain, which took us about an hour to cross, we saw a number of the 'Azázimeh Arabs feeding their flocks. Wády Marreh itself heads at the southern edge of the plain, and descends very rapidly to a level considerably lower than the plain itself (more than four hundred feet). The pass by which we descended into it is called the Nagb el Ghárib, and the view from the top is very impressive. As well as the cliffs and mountains, there are huge "jorfs," mountains in themselves, which show that the wády is only cut through the deep alluvial deposit of which the plain is formed—it is like Wády Moweileh on a gigantic scale. The valley itself is broad and level, broken, however, by various rolling hills and mounds, and, being in a limestone district, and not relieved by any verdure, gives out a tremendous glare. We descended the nagb and went for about half an hour along the valley to the west, after which we turned up a wády called Emkaab, and camped in a small branch of it near the water, which, by the way, is very salt and filthy to the taste. We arranged with one of the 'Azázimeh Arabs to guide us to 'Abdeh, and afterwards through Jebel Magráh to Wady Jeráfeh, making first a detour to Jebel Maderah. He came with the understanding that he was not to go into the 'Arabah, as he was afraid of the Kerek Arabs, between whom and his tribe there is a blood feud, but as we wished to go through the mountains this exactly suited our views.

In the middle of the night we were awakened by the report of a gun, and immediately the whole camp was up in arms and a brilliant fire lighted. It seems that an 'Azzámí Arab had skulked up to the tent, seeking what he might devour, but a dog by which he was accompanied attracted the attention of 'Alí, one of our camel drivers, who straightway fired at the man. The latter made off, and the excitement was caused by all our men rushing about after him. In the morning the sheikh of the 'Azázimeh, with a select company of friends, came to our sheikh and swore that no one should go up to the ruins without bakhshísh, but getting curt answers they went off in high dudgeon, saying that they would prevent us from ascending the pass. Having finished our breakfast we went off in spite of their threats and proceeded up to

the head of the valley (Wády Emka'ab). Here was a very steep and difficult pass, to the top of which our opponents were hastening, and as they saw us coming after them they began to get in a great rage, and bade us get back and be off out of their country as soon as possible, if we valued our lives. As we still kept on they waxed more and more excited, began firing off their guns and singing their war song. A little boy at this point made his appearance, and hearing the sounds of war and seeing our own martial appearance and that of our two Jehalín, thought that his last hour was come, and, crying bitterly, besought us not to kill him. We quieted his fears and gave him a small coin, for which and for his life he seemed extremely grateful. The 'Azázimeh had by this time taken possession of the top of the pass, and were frantically ordering us back and presenting their guns at us. We sat down after bantering them a little, which only enraged them the more, and sent up one of our men to make overtures. However, they would not let him come near, nor listen to any terms, but threw stones at him, and stood on the edge of the precipice in very warlike attitudes, and swore that no one, Muslim or Christian, should pass that way. Salámeh tried to pacify them, when the chief ruffian stood up in a most picturesque attitude and bade him get back. "Get back, O Bedawí," said he; "if you come a step further it is at the peril of your life;" and, again, "By the living God, if any one sets foot here we will roll him over as we would an ibex." So poor Salámeh had to come back, and 'Own, our other man, went up with an offer of thirty piastres. His approach with Salámeh, who again tried his luck, was the signal for a fresh outbreak, and this time they rushed at him with their swords drawn, lit a beacon fire, and yelled out, "Assemble, O Arabs, war is proclaimed!" (*Hallat el gom*). We sat below, placidly smoking our pipes and waiting for the issue, which, after a long parley, and many fresh outbreaks, resulted in our promising them eight wezaris, not quite two dollars, upon which we were allowed to ascend, and were received with due ceremony on the top. Attended by the whole assemblage, eight in number, besides our own two men, we walked on towards the ruins, over a broad terrace, up another steep hill-side, and over a plateau in which was a very precipitous ravine (like those at Serabít el Khádim, but having water and a few dwarf palms at the bottom). Crossing another line of hills we at last reached the ruins, and after resting for a few minutes began to sketch and work. 'Abdeh is situated on a lofty mountain plateau about 850ft. above the wády in which we were encamped; the west end is sheer and precipitous, and commands a fine view over the surrounding country, which is seen to be a vast plateau intersected by deep wádies, and broken up here and there by ridges of low mountains. The mountains to the west, which form the highest point of the prospect, are the head of Wády el Abyadh, and Esbeitá is situated (though, of course, concealed from view) just where that wády flows out into the plain. The precipitous end of the plateau, of which I have just spoken, is escarped and excavated with caves similar to the arrangement at Meshrifeh. The


rude wall
Tower
Stair case
ruins of dwellings
reservoir
Arch way
Arch way
In the face of the Escarpment are Numbers of dwellings half excavated
ruined dwellings
cave
ruins
broken Columns
Scale 160 ft to the inch
El Abdeh

ruins lie east and west, and are not very imposing, though covering a considerable extent of ground. They consist of a sort of casbah, or fort, with a small collection of dwellings, &c., also surrounded by a wall, the continuation of the fort. The buildings are evidently Christian, for we found a cross sculptured over one of the doors. Some of the walls are standing to the height of about 15ft., and are composed of very regularly squared stones. To the south are the ruins of a small town or village, but no plan can be made out of the arrangement as at Esbeitá. In the Magráh, below the fort to the west, is a very perfect house with a circular hole in the roof, but we had not time to visit it. At a little distance from the town to the south-east is a cave (probably once used as a reservoir) in the hill-side, in which the Arabs fable that a "pot" (*gidr*) full of wealth lies buried. At 'Abdeh the better sort of houses are built within the fort enclosure; the hill on which it stands is defended on the land side by a stout wall; and in the centre of the fort is a reservoir.

The surrounding plateau shows traces of having once been under cultivation, and there are many of the mounds for grapes, called here *rujúm el kurúm* (or vineyard heaps), like those found in the neighbourhood of Esbeitá and 'Aujeh.

As we came down again from the ruins we stopped to drink some water at the tents of some 'Azázimeh; they were the most bare, wretched, savage dwellings I have ever seen. One half-clad, middle-aged woman, and a very old one, three or four quite naked children, and a waterskin, were the only furniture of the tent.

A little before sunset we reached camp, and old Hamzeh waxed furious and foul-mouthed at the recital of our adventures; and when the 'Azázimeh appeared to claim black mail, a great row ensued, and some one having called him the father of a dog, we were obliged to restrain him by main force from using a sword which he had snatched up. A bright thought struck Mr. Drake as the sheikh of the 'Azázimeh was counting out his money, and we asked for the pipe which the sheikh was smoking, and which he had made with great labour out of a stone, and valued highly. He gave it with an ill grace, and one of the others whispered to me to restore it, but I thanked him, and to his great disgust kept the trophy. At last they went off and we dined in peace.

Here and at other places where no Europeans had before ventured, we overcame very serious difficulties at a trifling cost; but elsewhere, where the ill-advised liberality of M. de Saulcy and the Duc de Luynes and others has raised the expectations and excited the cupidity of the Bedawín, we were often compelled to pay extravagant sums before we could prevail upon them to show us a single thing. The invariable answer to our remonstrances in such cases would be, "The Emír thought it worth so much, and if you don't like the price you need not go."

I mention this because that part of our journey which lay through districts previously visited was beyond all proportion more expensive

than that through unknown parts of the country; and while professing ourselves able to deal on fair terms with the Bedawín, we were powerless in the face of such precedents as "the Emír's" lavish bakhshísh. Had we given in at first to the 'Azázimeh they would have demanded pounds instead of piastres, and we might, by paying these demands, not only have saved ourselves some unpleasantness, but have effectually closed 'Abdeh against all but millionaires. As it was, neither our purses nor our inclinations sanctioned such a course, and we preferred trusting to firmness and patience for success.

The discovery of the real site of Eboda is important in a geographical point of view, as Dr. Robinson and others have identified it with El 'Aujeh, (ruins which I have described before,) and the existence of an ancient road from Gaza to Petra and Akabah, passing through the 'Azázimeh mountains, has consequently remained a matter of great doubt.

On March 30th we walked down Wády Marreh for about seven miles, the scenery being as dull and uninteresting as can well be imagined. The wády bed is filled with fine white sand, broken jorfs rise up here and there, and ranges of low and perfectly featureless mountains on either side complete the picture. Those on the right are called Es Shahabíyeh; those on the left El Hadhirá. At the end of the latter range is an opening with a broad plain in front, called Abu Taraibeh, with the mountains of Kurnub to the left, and upon these the ruins of the same name stand, and through the same opening a wády debouches, called Wády er Rákib. Presently the plain between the two mountains, (or rather the cutting in the plateau, for such it is,) through which Wády Marreh runs, becomes blocked up by low irregular hills, through which the path takes one or two sharp turns. In the entrance to the little pass thus formed are two small stone heaps, each with a flat stone beside it, on which is cut a rude cross, the mark of the hero Ahmadí, whose exploits they are placed to commemorate. Ahmadí and Jirmí are the names of two warriors who came this way, and opposed single-handed an invading force of 500 horsemen, slaying every one. Just past these heaps (which are called Rujúm Ahmadí) is yet another, at the head of Wády Madherah, a stony-bedded valley which heads about this point. It has the same cross beside it, and is covered with tributary grass placed on it to mark the spot where the hero bathed after the heat of the bloody fight. There was good rain water collected in some pools close by. This Wády Maderah receives the waters of Marreh, and broadening out flows down to Jebel Madherah itself. Four miles farther down, the ancient road, which we had hitherto been following, branches off into the mountains of the 'Azázimeh by a valley called Umm Tarfa. We were surprised to hear from the Arabs that Jebel Madherah lay only a little farther down the wády of that name, so sending on our camels, with orders to camp in the Wády Umm Tarfa, we proceeded to ascertain if the information was correct. After two miles we reached the foot of the mountain, or rather large isolated mound, and sketched in this, together

with the neighbouring passes of Yemen and Sufáh, over which lie the roads from Hebron to Petra. We found the position of this mountain to be wrongly marked on the maps by more than twelve miles.

On the base and summit are numerous blocks of stone, concerning the origin of which the Arabs tell the following legend:—"A people once dwelt here, to whom there came one day some travellers seeking hospitality; but the people of the place did unto them a vile and horrible deed, wherefore the Almighty, in his anger, rained down these stones upon them, and destroyed them from off the face of the earth."

The legend, evidently a transplanted reminiscence of the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, is almost identical with that given by Strabo, who calls the site of the perished city by a similar name Μοασάδα (Strabo XVI., cap. ii. 44).

The whole of the wády and road from the Nagb Gharib to Madherah, being the road by which the hostile tribes from the east invade the 'Azázimeh, is marked by stone heaps, each of which commemorates some incident of Arab warfare, for they indicate the spot where either a horse was slain or a combatant fell, or else they are breastworks thrown up as a shelter to shoot from. The most frequent and imposing are said to belong to the horses. The immediate neighbourhood of the *rujúm Ahmadí* is covered with these cairns, and undoubtedly some great conflict did take place here, perhaps before the Arab times. We were enabled to "take a rise" out of the 'Azázimeh who had troubled us so at 'Abdeh, by giving out that we intended going to Madherah, though we did not really mean to ascend the hill. They posted off to defend the ascent, and were waiting for us on the top, as Selím (our guide) told us. He offered to go on and make peace, and was so disgusted when he found that we did not even want to go up, and that there was no bakhshísh to be got from us, that he turned back and left us to find our way to camp by ourselves. The 'Azázimeh were waiting at Madherah fondly expecting us, and reckoning on a scene and spoil, while we were comfortably jogging on our way. Near our camp in Wády Umm Tarfa were some pleasant pools of rain water, in which we took a bathe before dinner.

Our journey the next day lay through as ugly and uninteresting a piece of country as can well be conceived, passing over the top of the plateau of the 'Azázimeh mountains, black rough ground, totally destitute of animal life, and with very little vegetation, and that only in the wádies which intersect it. The plateau is not level, but, as might be expected, is covered with low mountains, little better, however, than inequalities of the ground on a gigantic scale. We began the day with a disturbance; Selím, the 'Azzámí guide whom we had brought with us, turned out a perfect brute beast, and since the affair of Jebel Madherah seemed much inclined to show his teeth. His temper was not improved by my bantering him before we set out, and when we were fairly under weigh he became sullen and morose. At this the sheikh flew into a violent rage, told him to be off, and was going to beat him with a stick which he had in his hand, when the scoundrel drew his sword,

and glaring fiercely and swearing horribly, was proceeding to execute his threat of demolishing poor old Hamzeh, upon which we interfered, and with some difficulty made peace. At last we got off, and wandered through the dull featureless hills amidst a thick desert haze, which did not add to the beauty of the scene, until we came to Wády Hanjúrah el Gattár. This is a broad valley which flows down into Wády Madherah; the sides are steep and precipitous, from two hundred to three hundred feet high; but as both sides are exactly of the same height, and perfectly straight on the top, the valley looks like a huge ditch. The bottom is paved with smooth but uneven limestone, and contains a few shrubs and pools of rain water at long distances apart. Before striking the path which runs alongside the valley, we stopped at the head of one of its little tributaries to look at three *beden* (ibexes) which were perched provokingly near on a neighbouring height, gazing with astonishment at such unwonted intruders on their solitude. Near the same spot was a little heap of stones, with the mark of the Haweitát tribe upon it. At the head of the tributary wády was a sort of oven, which Selím called *Zarb el Bedan*, and said was used to cook or store the flesh of any ibex the Arabs might shoot. At the head of Wády Hanjúrah, which begins very suddenly and precipitously, are a few retem bushes and a fine seyal tree. Here a road turns off by Mirzebeh and 'Ain el Weibeh to the 'Arabah, but we preferred keeping straight through the 'Azázimeh country, uninteresting as it is, and accordingly struck off to the east, until we again came to Wády Umm Tarfá, near the debouchure of which we had camped the night before. At the watershed of this wády we were shown cairns both in the bed and on a hill close by, which marked the place from which some invading horsemen had been shot, and where man and beast fell. The valley on the other side is called El Guleib. Resuming our walk over the rolling surface of the plateau, we reached a nagb, or rather series of three nagbs, called Nagb Ibn Már, a pass very steep and rugged, and one thousand feet above the sea-level. Descending by this, we found ourselves on a broad open space, which might almost be called a plain, and from which several large valleys, the principal ones being called Wády Rámán and Wády Abu Taraimeh, flow down into the 'Arabah. The elevation of the mountain near the Nagb Ibn Már is about 2,000ft., the same as that of Jebel 'Araif, which last, however, is considerably higher than Magráh. This shows that the plateau gradually lowers until it falls away, in a series of precipitous steps, into the 'Arabah on the east, and towards Jebel 'Araif to the south, terminating the plateau of the Azázimeh mountains, and again rising until it forms a second step at Jebel 'Ejmeh, the southern limit of the Tíh. Again our guide became unmanageable, quarrelling with one of our men, 'Own, and drawing his sword, and again we had to repress him. He was very surly for the rest of the day, and when the sheikh offered him a piece of bread he threw it at him, and went off grumbling to "find some friends to give him a supper, as he wouldn't eat with them." Our men were very apprehensive of molestation from the Arabs of the neighbourhood, and a strict watch was kept

throughout the night. A little girl turned up at our camp on her way to 'Abdeh, having come by herself from a place called Hesmeh, a six days' journey beyond Akabah, without bread or water, eating only a few herbs to support herself by the way. The distances during this day's journey were as follows:—Camp to head of Wády Hanjúrah, 60 min.; Wády Hanjúrah to Nagb Ibn Már, 145 min.; Nagb to camp, Wády in Abu Tareimeh, 55 min.

Crossing the wády in which we had encamped, and over a small watershed, we turned into Wády Gateifeh, a broad open valley, with rather finer scenery than we had lately been accustomed to. Here and there a little sandstone begins to peep out from beneath the limestone, and is sufficient to account for the improvement in the outlines of the landscape. From this we turned into Wády Rámán, some distance up which on the left we came upon a pool of rain water. Presently passing over a nagb about 180ft. high, we found ourselves within a few miles of the edge of the 'Azázimeh mountains, and could see the 'Arabah beyond. In the hills to the north was a ruined castle with a road beside it, called Cala'at Umm Guseir, probably a station on the old Roman road to 'Akabah. It is not unlikely that this name, Umm Guseir, may be identical with the ancient and hitherto unidentified station of Gypsaria, marked upon the Peutinger Tables. There is no other fort or ruin intervening between this and 'Abdeh, nor indeed would one be needed before the edge of the mountains. The road by the fort joins our own road in Wády Rámán, and there is no other route through the mountains but the one by which we came, and which Dr. Wilson had already supposed to exist. Selím, our 'Azzámí guide, having left us, we could not at first find our way, but after looking about for some time, we struck a road which comes direct from the fort above mentioned, and following this we emerged presently into the Wády el Jeráfeh. Here we began to search for water, as we had been on short commons the previous night, but we did not succeed in finding any until we reached Wády Ghamr, three hours after leaving camp, and even then it was only obtained by digging out some pits, or *themáïl*, which had been filled up by the seil. As there was no water to be procured farther on in the 'Arabah, we encamped at this spot. Wády Ghamr is a broad valley, with an immense grove of *tarfah* trees, and the verdure contrasting with the red colour of the sandstone, which here begins to show itself more plainly, was a pleasant relief to the eye after so long a sojourn in limestone districts.

Here again we found previous maps considerably at fault: Wády Ghamr is described as a smaller wády, taking its rise in the 'Azázimeh mountains, and flowing into the 'Arabah from the west; and Wády Jeráfeh is set down as a larger watercourse, flowing down from Jebel 'Ejmeh, and meeting the waters of the Ghamr at the south-east corner of the Magráh mountains. The real fact, however, is, that Wády Ghamr takes its rise to the south-east of Jebel 'Araif, flows round the base of the lower plateau, into which we had descended from the Nagb Ibn Már, and receives the waters of Jeráfeh from the north. The whole appear-

ance of this mountain district is desolate in the extreme, and although we found water in many parts of our route, the 'Azázimeh who inhabit it are some of the poorest and most degraded of the Arab tribes. We did not complete the exploration of their country without experiencing considerable opposition and annoyance, but owing to the light baggage with which we travelled, and the unpretending appearance of our *cortége*, we were enabled to overcome the difficulties, and to escape without any serious mishaps.

We were thoroughly glad to escape from the 'Azázimeh country, for in addition to the inhospitable character of its inhabitants it is one of the dreariest and most uninteresting regions which it is possible to conceive. Except in the case of one or two slight deviations, we kept for the whole way on a broad caravan track, which had the appearance of not having been used for a great length of time; it is rather damaged in places, but there is still a good road right through the mountains, and our guide affirmed that it was the only one. The ancient road probably came through the Dheigat el 'Amirín to 'Abdeh, then branched off to the Nagb el Ghárib, went down Wády Marreh, turned off into the mountains at Wády Umm Tarfá, and followed our track through them, coming past Cala'at Umm Guseir and by Wádies Jeráfeh and Ghamr into the 'Arabah; by this route much time would be saved in a journey from Gaza.

On April 4th we left Wády Ghamr by the low hills just above the camp, and were soon in the 'Arabah, and from the sloping sides of this we could see distinctly how the 'Azázimeh mountains terminated at Wády Ghamr. We crossed the 'Arabah diagonally, keeping a little to the south-east; the walk, about twelve miles from camp, was a very fatiguing one, lying entirely over *himádah*, or sand covered with flint; the Wády el Arabah itself is about five miles wide. The range of mountains in which Wády Músa is situated presented rather more picturesque outlines and colouring than those to which we had lately been accustomed. They consist of a ridge of igneous rock, principally porphyritic, which crops up in the midst of dark red sandstone, occasional strata of a lighter colour lying upon the porphyry mountains themselves. We entered them by a small winding wády in the edge of the limestone, and proceeding up this for about four miles ascended a *nagb* (pass) some 1,400ft. above our last camp, and pitched our tents on the plateau at the top, immediately to the north-west of Mount Hor, or, as it is called by the natives, Jebel Hárún. The peak is a fine jagged one, and towers conspicuously above the neighbouring heights; it is surrounded by a little white building, covering the reputed tomb of Aaron. The only thing of any interest which we met with in the 'Arabah was a, to us, new tree, called the *ghadha*.

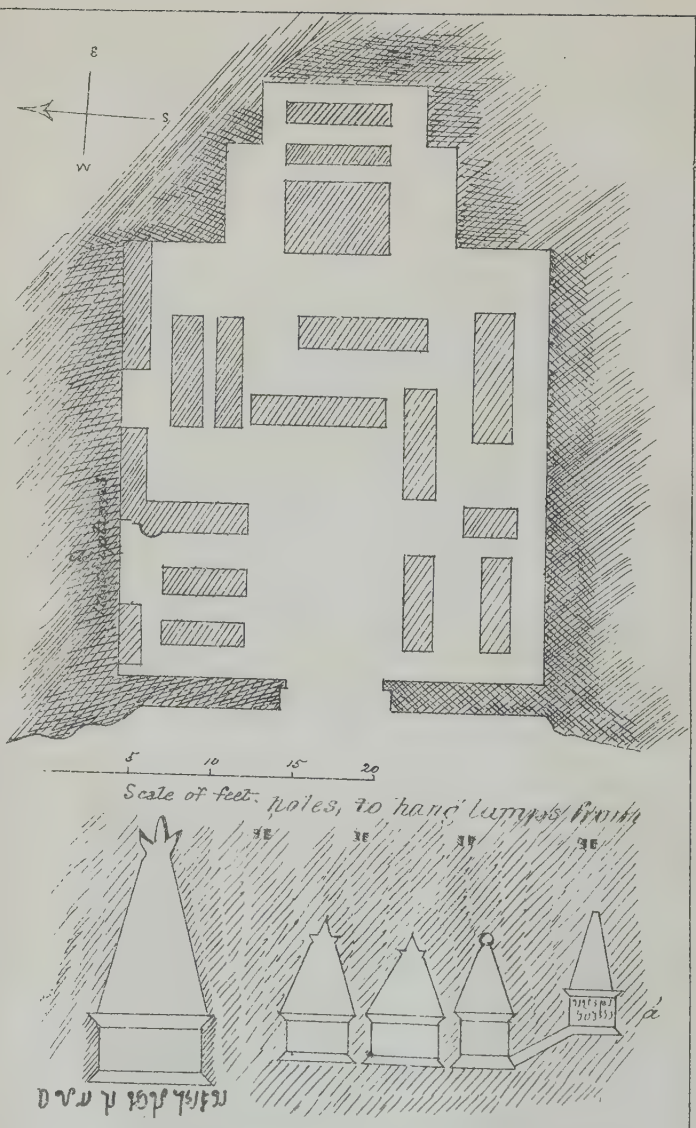
Early the next morning we ascended the Nagb er Rubá'i, and then turned off to the left towards the summit (1,400ft. above the camp) of Mount Hor in order to "steal a march" on the Arabs of the place, who are very exorbitant in their demands on travellers.

It is a fatiguing climb of about three-quarters of an hour from the top of the Nagb, and rises to an elevation of more than 4,000ft. above sea-level. At first our path lay over a long white block to the east of the mountain; and for the rest of the way we had to climb up the rugged red sandstone of the summit. Thus far we had got on well and still escaped unobserved; but just as we reached the foot of the summit a boy, who was tending goats, saw us, and going off to a high ridge began shrieking out wildly to the Arabs in the wády. The alarm was soon given, and all the time of our stay we heard constant shouts and firing from the Arabs as they gave the alarm in the valley below. On reaching the small plateau immediately below the summit, the first thing which met our eyes was a heap of ruins, and, beside the rock, a huge black cauldron used for boiling the sheep which are there sacrificed to Nebi Harún, the Prophet Aaron. A flight of steps cut out in the rock leads up a steep precipice to the tomb itself, and about half-way up these steps is a large cistern or chamber covered in with arches, over which the staircase is built. The tomb is an ordinary Muslim weli; the door was locked, but we contrived to look inside, and saw that the roof was decorated with ostrich shells and similar ornaments. Over the door is an inscription, stating that it was restored by Es Shim'áni, the son of Mohammed Calaón, Sultan of Egypt, by his father's orders, in the year 739 of the Hijrah. Having stayed long enough to complete our observations, and allow Mr. Drake to make a sketch of the summit and surrounding landscape, we came down by the side nearest the valley, which is very steep and precipitous, the path being often very difficult to find. As soon as we reached the valley we luckily came across our own camels, but were immediately set upon by a party of the Ma'ázeh, an awful set of ruffians, who accused us of having "visited the prophet" by stealth, swore that they would confiscate one of our camels, and otherwise made beasts of themselves. Our men, however, especially 'Own, who had accompanied us in our somewhat perilous attempt, swore that we had not done so, and after giving a few piastres we got rid of them. We were then making for our camping-place, and had nearly reached the solitary pillar called Zibb Far'ún, which marks the site of an ancient temple, when a furious shouting was heard in the valley, and about twenty or thirty armed men were seen rushing down upon us. We were quite prepared for a scene and a row, but, thrown off their guard by our appearance, and the Arabic greeting which we gave them, they met us with friendly demonstrations, and rushed off shouting as before, and saying that the enemy were upon them. It was now apparent what had happened; these were the Liyátheneh, and having heard the alarm given by the boy, and replied to by firing from the Arabs below, they imagined that a hostile tribe had attacked the place. We walked on as far as the side wády, in which the amphitheatre is situated, and there encamped. We had hardly got settled, however, before the Liyátheneh returned, having learnt the real state of the case, and began at first to make a disturbance, and swear

that we had been up "Aaron," but after some discussion we succeeded in pacifying them. One fellow, the brother of the sheikh, was actually civil. They brought us a goat, and killed it upon the spot, all of them staying to partake of the meat, and to "watch over our tent at night," a little piece of civility which cost us nearly three dollars.

The colouring and outlines of the rocks are very fine, but the general effect of the tints is not so magnificent as we had been led to expect, being of a deep chocolate. But when you come to a piece of the rock that has been cut or excavated, it is really magnificent, red, white, and yellow streaks coming one upon another, and giving in the sunlight the effect of gorgeous watered silk. The excavations are very curious, many which we saw having certainly never been tombs, but dwellings; we had not, however, leisure to do more than just glance at them then, as our time was fully occupied in keeping a sharp look-out after the fellahín.

On April 6th, after having been kept awake the greater part of the night by the noise and disputing of the Arabs, we were aroused before daylight by the arrival of the mules which were to take us up to the Liyátheneh encampment, so making a hurried breakfast of dry bread and tea, we started off. Passing by the amphitheatre, we entered the Sík, a narrow cutting about two miles long between high and precipitous cliffs, and which in beauty of colour and grandeur of form exceeds even the glowing descriptions which have been given of it. Emerging from this, we came out into a more open country amongst limestone hills. Here several tombs are excavated in the white limestone, and amongst them also are a few detached monolithic monuments resembling that known as the tomb of Absalom at Jerusalem, but without the conical roof which distinguishes the latter. Passing the village of Eljí, we ascended the hills for an hour and a half, and at last reached the camp of the Liyátheneh, which consisted of about a hundred tents arranged in a great square, with a double row forming a street on either of two of the sides. As we neared the place we were met by a party of men from the camp, the Sheikh Silmán amongst them, who at once began quarrelling with the men who had brought mules for us, and claiming a share in the hire. Our tent was pitched in the centre of the square, and we were immediately surrounded by the most scoundrelly gang conceivable, who kept on incessantly begging for everything they could think of, and it was as much as we could do to keep them from picking and stealing. In the mean time a great and hideous row was going on between old Hamzeh and the sheikhs of the fellahín about the amount of black-mail which we were to pay. The terms ultimately fixed upon, though very exorbitant, we were glad to accept, if only to rid ourselves for a few hours of their irritating noise and squabbles. Towards the end of the afternoon we took a walk to the eastern end of the camp, where, at the head of a valley, is a well, and the remains of a ruined village called 'Ain and Khirbet D'háah. In the evening some 'Ammarín Arabs who had been sent for to take us east-



Petra

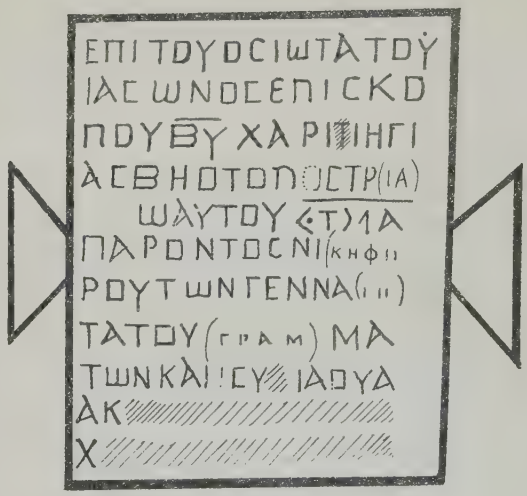
Plan of cave shewing arrangement of tombs & detail of inscriptions at a.

ward appeared, and, to add to the pleasures of the day, we found that neither they nor the Liyátheneh could take us to the Darb el Hajj, as the Arabs were fighting there. Here a question of some difficulty presented itself with regard to the expedition to Moab, which it had been arranged that I should undertake. The obvious and cheapest route was to return to Jerusalem and enter the country by the territory and under the escort of the 'Adwán. To take the eastern course involved passing through a country already embroiled in warfare, and amongst tribes whose lawlessness and rapacity are proverbial even amongst the Bedawín themselves. Several considerations, however, determined us to take the latter course. The 'Adwán and Skhúr Arabs had been employed in the affair of the Dhibán stone, and being "posted up" in desert news, we knew that they had not only searched in vain in their own country, but had been unsuccessful in their attempts to discover several "written stones" said to be in the possession of the Hamaideh and Beni Hamídeh, the tribes whose opposition caused the lamentable destruction of the celebrated monument of Meshá. We accordingly resolved to brave the risks and enter into negotiations with the last-mentioned tribes, unprejudiced by the presence of strangers, whom we knew that they regarded with no small suspicion and distrust. We accordingly made arrangements with the 'Ammarín that they should conduct us to Shihán in Moab for twenty napoleons, and consign us to the Beni Hamídeh Arabs there.

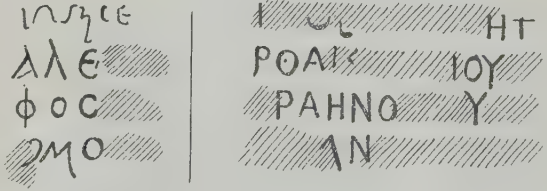
In the night we were visited by a severe storm of snow and sleet, and as our camp was 4,700ft. above sea-level we found it bitterly cold. Notwithstanding this, however, we took with us the next morning four of the villainous fellahín, and went down to visit the valley. Passing the village of Eljí, which consists only of a few rude stone houses, we reached the bed of the wády, and passing the ruins of 'Aireh on the opposite (west) hill, and crossing a running stream and some cornfields, came to the commencement of the rock-hewn tombs and dwellings of Petra. The rocks before reaching the Sík are mostly white, and there is consequently less beauty of colouring, but the quaint excavations even here are well worth a visit. The principal of these are, first, a temple with Corinthian columns, and two side aisles, on the hill-side beneath 'Aireh; second, a tomb with four pyramids on the top, which has been photographed by Mr. Bergheim, of Jerusalem; thirdly, three tombs cut out of the solid rock, and, like those mentioned above, somewhat resembling the tomb of Absalom at Jerusalem. The scene presented to the view on entering the Sík is romantic and beautiful in the extreme,—a narrow passage between high perpendicular cliffs of the richest hue, and spanned by an arch built high up on the rock, and now quite out of reach, which anciently carried an aqueduct from the heights above. Below trickles a clear sparkling brook, and the whole entrance is filled with oleanders, while creepers hang in luxuriant green festoons from the walls. The more you advance, the narrower and grander the gorge becomes; about

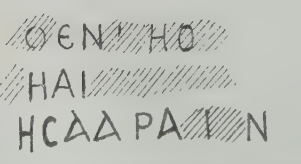
half-way down it, on the left-hand side, are some little square cuttings in the wall, evidently intended for tablets, and some niches, which have been described as having contained statues, but which are not only too small, but are filled up with carving—in one a tree pattern could still be traced. They are undoubtedly dedicatory altars, and beneath them we found five or six imperfect Greek inscriptions. At the end of the Sík, or rather where it takes a sharp turn, you come suddenly upon the Khazneh, which in beauty of form and colouring surpasses all the rest. The stone of the façade is of a delicate but deep rose-colour, and that of the uncut rock around it varies from every shade of red to chocolate. It has a little space in front filled with oleander and green grass, which add to the beauty of the scene. At the corner of this space is a small ravine, up which a flight of steps once led. The object of the temple, and the interpretation of the architectural ornaments upon it, have occasioned much discussion, but I was enabled, by studying the details carefully, to solve the difficulty, and I feel sure that a reference to Mr. Bergheim's photograph of the Khazneh will convince any antiquarian that my hypothesis is correct. Over the façade is a half-obliterated ornament which has been variously described, but which a more careful inspection proved to be a lyre, and the figures, *nine* in number, instead of being "armed and winged," proved to be draped female statues. The shape of the façade, and the curious round ornament in the centre, were evidently selected so as to admit of the symmetrical arrangement of the nine female figures, which I have no doubt whatever were intended to represent the nine Muses; the figure of Apollo would have spoilt the symmetry of the whole, and, accordingly, we have his emblem, the lyre, introduced instead. The mysterious excavation, then, is nothing but the *Musæum* of Petra—not what the Turks would call an "Antiquity House," but the Philharmonic institution of the place. Another turn brings us into the amphitheatre; the view from here is perhaps one of the grandest in the place, as it takes in nearly all the excavated parts of the valley. The boxes or loculi (or tombs, as they have been called) above the seats of the theatre have really nothing to do with its plan or construction; the fact is that they must have existed *before the theatre was cut out*, and their faces have been cut away in hollowing out the auditorium. There is no possible means of getting up to them now, as all the front parts are cut away to suit the exigencies of the case. On your right as you emerge from the Sík, and immediately opposite to the theatre, are some tombs with very perfect and elegantly constructed fronts. The first of these has a curious arrangement of graves or loculi; they are cut in the floor, not lying in any one direction, but placed all ways, so as to make the most of the room. On the wall to the left of the entrance are some rude representations of sepulchral monuments, and beneath these two Nabathæan inscriptions. Similar representations of tombs occur on several of the excavations; they are in shape something between an obelisk and a pyramid, and apparently

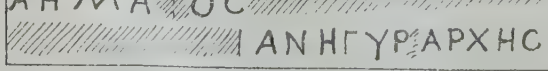
Petra.



in red paint. Inside large tomb.







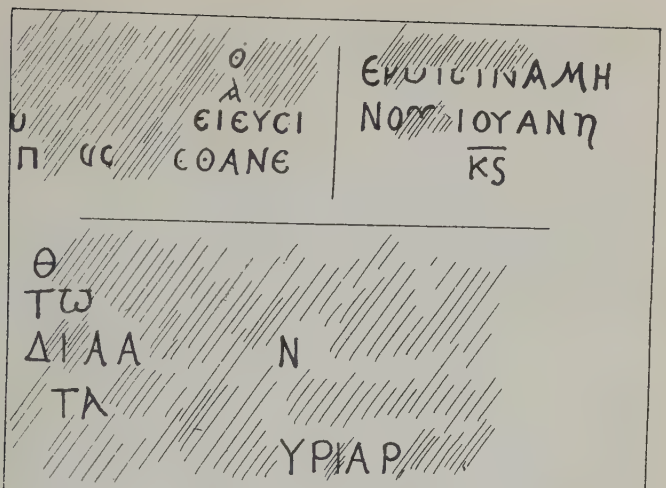
Fragments of inscriptions in the Sík.

indicate the ordinary pattern of sepulchral monuments in use amongst the Nabathæans. A little farther on are some arched terraces connected with excavations below, and immediately above these, though having no other connection with them, is a very fine excavated temple, with an elaborately carved front. The inside originally contained six loculi, or recesses, which have since been made into three, and rounded at the top to form apses, the place having been subsequently turned into a Christian church. A Greek inscription in red paint records the fact of its consecration, but the latter part, containing the date, is illegible. The pleasure of our sight-seeing was marred by the uncomfortable state of the weather and the constant importunities of the fellahín who accompanied us. They did not, it is true, attempt any real or pretended violence, but their annoyance was almost as great as if they had. There are many tombs and dwellings, which are now inaccessible, but traces of staircases cut in the rock, and now broken away, may be seen everywhere. Amidst snow and biting cold wind we returned at last to our elevated camp. All the next night snow and hail fell constantly, and continued during the next day, so that we were soon six inches deep in snow. We of course stayed in all day, and kept ourselves as comfortable as the weather and the annoyance caused by our neighbours would allow. On April 9th we again visited the valley, and spent some time in copying the inscriptions on the Sík, &c., after which we examined the ravines in the western cliffs, but found nothing of interest, except that here the ornament over the doors was of a different shape, and more like a Norman arch. The oleanders and tarfah-trees which grow in these ravines make the scene extremely beautiful and romantic. At the northern turn in the wády, as you leave the western acclivities, are three large tombs with perfect fronts, the first and largest of them is called Magháret en Nasára, or the Christian's Cave, and was at the time of our entry occupied by several families of the fellahín. Every tomb has its owner, who dwells there with his wives and family during the cold or wet weather. Just past this is the ravine in which Irby and Mangles found the Sinaitic inscriptions; it is on a large temple, with a fine front, having four attached columns, and is partly built up with masonry. Unfortunately, we did not at the time remember their description of it, and passed it by, as our time was limited for that day, and we did not care to climb upon the somewhat rugged platform on which it stands. It was described to us as large enough to hold fifteen families. On the opposite side of the ravine is a little winding cleft in the rock, at the entrance to which were some small dedicatory altars, but as it was at the time more than knee-deep in water we had to leave it unexplored. We returned to camp by ascending this ravine, and in a few minutes reached the ruins of the village of 'Aireh. A little ravine branches off to the left, with an arch spanning it, and carrying an aqueduct from the heights; it is called Gantarat bint Far'ún (Pharaoh's Daughter's Arch), and the ascent to the east is named Besatín Far'ún, or Pharaoh's Gardens. There are several ruined houses about, and a fort at the top of the left-

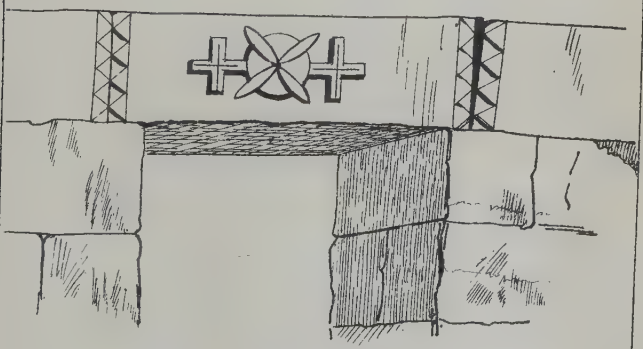
hand ravine, occupying a most commanding position, as it overlooks the entire valley, and defends the only part not protected by some difficult mountain pass. The path to the top of the ravine was very rugged and difficult, and we had frequently to creep between narrow crevices of rocks to get along at all. A well-made aqueduct runs along the whole way. On one of the rocks was scratched a rude representation of the front of a tomb, with the staircase ornament instead of a pediment. The next morning we were again kept in camp by the cold; the noise by which we were continually worried was this day increased by a divorce cause which was being heard in the "Shigg," or public reception tent, before the sheikh. One of the fellahín brought in a white macintosh stolen from some former traveller, and offered it for sale for twelve piastres, but we did not like to produce so much money for it before such a set of villains.

At last, on April 11th, after a very noisy start, and having had to look very sharp after the baggage, we got away, followed, however, by a great number of the Liyátheneh, who would have been even more importunate and troublesome had we not given the sheikh an extra bakhshísh to keep them in order. We went over the hill by the fort of 'Aireh, from which we obtained a splendid view of the whole of Wády Músa, and followed the road over the mountains to the north-east, which is called El Bareidhí. Here we were told of two ruined cities, Dibdibeh and Bannoureh, to the right. In about three hours we reached a flat plateau with a few large but straggling crags upon it, and found ourselves at a cave with a large square chamber and a vestibule, in which we encamped. The front of the cave had been long since destroyed, but a portion of the lintel was lying on the rocky platform in front of it; on either side of the vestibule was a smaller chamber, the doors of which had evidently once had stone lintels inserted in them. The great door had a window on the left-hand side; this was Wády Beidhá, once the site of an ancient city, of which a few stones only remain now. The Liyátheneh having deposited our luggage, asked for a breakfast and bakhshísh, but as we had now left their territory, and the 'Ammarín were beginning to collect, we defied them, and flatly refused to give them a penny, at which they went off in great disgust. Two ruffians, however, stayed behind, one named Ibrahím el Hasanát, a smooth-spoken scoundrel, but one of the most dangerous in the gang, and the same man who fired upon a party some time before and dangerously wounded their dragoman. This fellow so frightened the 'Ammarín by refusing to go, and threatening to shoot some one, that at last we gave him a trifle to get rid of him at the instance of the Arabs, and he took a pathetic farewell of us, during which time, however, we took the necessary precaution of standing to our guns. Our beds were strewn in the cave, but as the floor was some feet thick with goats' droppings, the fleas and odours were anything but pleasant.

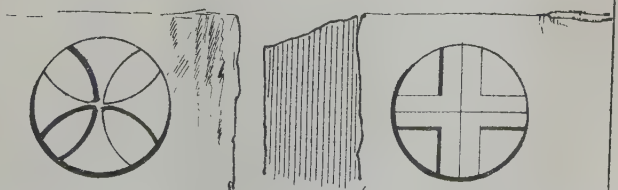
The fellahín of Petra are of so decidedly a Jewish type that Dr. Wilson and others have imagined them to be the descendants of those



Fragments of inscriptions from the Sík. Petra



Doorway at Umm Rasás



At Umm Rasás

Simeonites who settled in Edom. This view is erroneous, as it is clear that their immigration into the country dates after the Mohammedan conquests. They are the Liyátheneh, that is, sons of Leith, a lineal descendant of Kaab, and a branch of the Kheibari Jews, who resided near Mecca, and played so important a part in the early history of Islam.

The Kheibari are still found in large numbers about Mecca and Medina, and are much dreaded by the Hajj caravans, as they invariably rob and murder any unarmed stragglers; by Dr. Wolff and other learned travellers they have been identified with the Rechabites mentioned in Jeremiah xviii. 2. The same lawlessness and cowardice characterise the Liyátheneh of Petra. Although professing themselves to be Mohammedans, they are laxer in their religious discipline than even the Bedawín themselves, whose observances are really more Sabæan than Muslim. The Liyátheneh retain not only the distinctive physiognomy, but many of the customs of the Jews, such as wearing the Pharisaic love-locks.

Our Jehalín camel-drivers were not allowed to remain in Wády Músa a single day, and even could they have stopped they would have been unable to accompany us any farther, on account of their blood-feud with the Arabs to the east of the 'Arabah.

The fellahín having left, Selámeh ibn 'Awwád, the sheikh of the 'Ammarín was at first all smiles and fair promises, and began to recount to us his own troubles, telling us that Wády Músa belonged to him and to his ancestors, but that the Liyátheneh a few years back had taken it from the 'Ammarín by force of arms, and were confirmed in their possession of it, conjointly with the Haweitát, by the Turkish officials, at the instance of Rafá'i Bey, who was then at 'Akabah. Presently, while we were at dinner, we heard a great disturbance, and found that he had changed his tone, and in spite of his solemn promises to take us to Shihán for the twenty napoleons, was demanding exorbitant sums for *rafk*, or black-mail. Old Hamzeh came in looking more mad than usual, and after beating his breast, and making an insane attempt to tear his clothes, sat down on my bed, and suddenly plucking two handfuls of hair out of his beard, presented one to each of us. At last we got out of him that the rascal Selámeh had declared that he would leave us where we were for the Liyátheneh to rob and perhaps murder us, and with the certainty of starvation, unless we paid another thirty pounds for *rafk*. This sum was ultimately reduced to eleven napoleons, which we had to pay with the best grace we could.

On April 12th, the camels not having yet arrived, we went out in the morning with a couple of men to visit the ruins of El Beidhá and El Bárid. A little way to the south-east of our camp was a large cave, some 15ft. up in the rock. On examining it closely it turned out to be an immense reservoir, with three compartments cut in the solid rock, and containing now a good supply of water. A flight of steps led down to the water on the left hand, and the ceiling and walls were plastered, the cornice being

ornamented with a line of red and black paint, and a fringe of the impressions of human hands also alternately in red and black paint. There is a channel cut in the face of the rock above; and in front of the reservoir itself (which is so arranged as to project a little into the platform) was once a wall for the stream to shoot against, and so run into the chamber. When there is rain the Arabs hang a large bush against the face of the rock, which serves the same purpose of conducting the water into the reservoir, and preventing it from dashing over and wasting as it would otherwise do. A little farther on is a small rock-hewn temple, having a façade composed of two columns and a pediment, surmounted by a small urn, after the pattern of those in Wády Músa. From the appearance of the flight of steps leading up to it, and the diminutive size of the interior chamber, it would seem to have been left unfinished. Immediately after this point you enter a narrow ravine, or Sík, which has been once closed by a door, the sockets being still visible. After a few minutes the ravine widens out, and you enter a street of dwellings, temples, and cisterns, all cut out of the rock, not so elaborate in their details as those in Wády Músa, and wanting the beautiful colouring of the latter, but still very pretty, and apparently of older date. At every point are staircases in small clefts, and sometimes in the face of the rock, most of them leading merely to "high places" and platforms, designed perhaps for sacrificial purposes. Some of the temples have plaster on the walls, rudely painted to represent stones. One has a very elaborately painted ceiling with a pretty device of flowers, festoons of grape-vines and convolvuli, and cupids playing about on the branches; one of them holds a drawn bow. The execution is by no means contemptible, and is apparently Roman. As you emerge from the Sík there is a temple on the left with a very elaborate façade of four columns. The whole ravine is full of oleanders and carpeted with the softest grass: it terminates abruptly in a narrow cleft, at the top of which is a temple, and the façade of this has fallen down and blocked up the way. The city or village is called El Bárid, and was undoubtedly Horite in its origin, as the excavations are obviously in this case *all* dwellings, but they have been occupied by a later people. On the rocks on either side we found several Nabathæan inscriptions. The Arabs have a tradition that the former inhabitants found a door in the rock leading to a rich and fertile subterranean land, with which they were so pleased that they entered it, made their dwellings therein, and closed the door behind them for ever. At the end of the day, when we had returned to our cave, some more of the 'Ammarín Arabs came up and another diabolical row ensued, ending in their refusing to take us on unless we paid an additional four napoleons.

At last, on April 13th, we got off, and leaving the scattered rocks of Beidhá, entered a fine Sík, called Abu 'Alda, and leading to a valley of the same name. Here again the rocks assumed the gorgeous colouring of Petra, being in fact a continuation of the same range. The rugged and overhanging cliffs, and the thick forests of tarfah and oleander,

made the scenery magnificent. At the end of Wády Abu 'Alda is the basaltic chain which we had noticed on first entering the mountains of Edom. Crossing a spur of this we came into Wády Sumra, which we ascended to the Nagb Eshkárt Emsa'ad, and from this came down again for a short distance, and then mounted to the Nagb Nemelah, from which we once more caught a glimpse of the 'Arabah and of the distant mountains of the 'Azázimeh. On the first pass we were joined by some Arabs who began to demand from Selámeh a share in the plunder, and it ended in his making fresh demands upon us at night. When we abused old Hamzeh for his incapacity and for promising money in our name, the old fool whined out that he could not help himself, and undoing his girdle, prepared to strip himself and hand us his shirt by way of showing how helpless he was. Half our trouble and expense was due to his allowing the Arabs to worry and frighten him. Before starting on the following morning they demanded from him the two and a-half napoleons which he had promised that we should pay, and, presenting their guns at him, threatened to murder him unless he complied with their request.

Scarcely was breakfast over before we had another row, the brute Selámeh demanding that we should pay for his *delúleh*, *i.e.*, the camel on which he himself rode, and we were powerless to resist, as he took the camels away and refused to go on. Hamzeh, with his usual stupidity, stepped in as I was bargaining and spoilt my chance of beating him down. Our course lay along the eastern slopes of the 'Arabah, but as the wádies and seils here are very featureless, and a thick desert haze hid the mountains on either side, there was not much to interest us. A hot wind was also blowing, which did not add to the pleasure of our walk. Towards sunset we reached Samrat Fiddán, where we intended to encamp, but just before entering it we espied a company of Arabs armed and mounted on camels. Preparations were at once made in case of an attack by the strangers; our own camels were drawn aside beneath the shelter of a rock; and each of the party examined his arms and prepared to use them if necessary, while Selámeh and one of the men, throwing off their 'abbas and kefíyehs, rushed forward to meet the strangers and find out whether their intention was peace or war. There is something rather pleasant in the uncertainty and excitement of such a moment, though we were not sorry to see both parties embrace and find that the newcomers were members of the same tribe, and that they consisted of Suleimán, another of the 'Ammarín sheikhs, and some men who had been to Kerek for corn. It turned out though, after all, that we had little to congratulate ourselves upon, for Suleimán at once began a row with Selámeh about the right of passage, and, seizing one of the camels, declared that none of us should pass until he had been paid a blackmail. The two got into a frightful rage, called each other by all the polite epithets which *very* vulgar Arabic could afford, and were soon in the arms of their mutual friends and retainers, rushing feebly towards

each other with drawn swords. As yet we had not been asked for anything, and rather enjoyed the exhibition. Presently things were apparently settled, and Suleimán came to beg pardon of us for having made a disturbance. We found that some soldiers had been or were at Shihán; and, on learning that our destination was the same place, the Arabs had thought it safer to conclude the matter peaceably. Farj, the brother of Suleimán, who had come with us from Beidhá, was still obstinate, but he was sent home, and Suleimán took his place.

In the morning we found that Suleimán, who was a smooth-spoken scoundrel, had renewed his claim, and that Selámeh had given him a napoleon and lent two more to Hamzeh to be given to him on our account! We utterly repudiated his right to do anything of the sort, and swore that, come what might, we would not pay another farthing. They pretended to give in, and we at last got away. Crossing from the tarfah grove in which our tent was pitched, we came into Wády Fiddán itself, a pretty valley with a deep swift stream of running water in it. We then turned off by some rocks of conglomerate; one of which is naturally arched, and is held in reverence by the Arabs, who visit it and hang up offerings in front of it, regarding it as a weli, or saint's tomb. It is called Umm ed Duhúr, but they had no tradition to account for their observance, which they say arises merely from ancestral custom. A piece of flat table-land brought us to Wády el Weibeh, by which we descended into the 'Arabah. A dreary piece of desert with a large *kethíb*, or sand hill, had next to be crossed, and passing successively Wádies Salamán and Seil Dhalal on the right, we reached Wády T'láh about one o'clock. Here was a stream of water, a large ruined *birkeh* (or tank), and the foundations of a fort, with the remains of a small village attached thereto. It was evidently another station on the old Roman road from Gaza, and probably a branch turning off to Arabia. The Hajj route at the present day turns down the wády which we had crossed just before, viz., Wády Seil Dhalal. Here we rested for two hours, and set off about three o'clock so as to reach the encampment of the Ghawárineh Arabs by night, and avoid the fatigue of a walk across the ghor in the heat of the day. The view was by no means a tempting one; the haze still continued, and revealed only a piece of white broken desert, the dreariest we had yet seen. Nor were our spirits cheered by seeing one of our camels drop its load and both our boxes roll over in the sand. Old Hamzeh surpassed himself in idiocy at this misadventure, for he had a notion that Mr. Drake's tin box was full of gold; he slipped down off his beast, without any shoes on, and rushed up to the spot, when seizing a great stone heaved it feebly in the direction of a passing Arab, swearing horribly all the time. Luckily nothing of any importance was lost or broken. Descending some low cliffs we came about sunset into the Ghor itself. It is a low flat piece of ground with a soft sandy soil filled with vegetation, the most noticeable trees being (1) the *'osher*, or apple of Sodom, a tropical plant with a fleshy leaf, which, as well as

the stem, on being broken yields a plentiful supply of milk said to possess blistering qualities; the milk of the 'osher-tree is said also to possess wonderful properties in assisting the ladies who drink it to increase the number of the household of their lords. (2) The *rak*, a plant with small thorns, and bearing a tiny fruit growing in bunches, and in shape and taste somewhat resembling our currants. Here and there swift copious streams of running water come down from the mountains, fertilising the whole of the district. We passed in succession the following *seils* (streams):—

Seil Ed Debbeh (dry).
„ Khanaizíreh.
„ Faifeh (two branches).
„ Ghor es Sáfí.

By the last we encamped in the midst of the dowár of the Ghawárineh Arabs. We reached it about half-past ten at night very tired, having walked over twelve hours that day. The scene, as we marched by moonlight through this tropical wood, was very striking, and as we were none of us allowed to speak above our breath lest some prowling enemies should be encamped or waiting near, there was a certain air of romance about the whole. In the neighbourhood of Seil Faifeh we espied a camel with a riding-saddle on, and an 'abba thrown across its back; the owner was evidently like ourselves travelling by night, but alone, and had wisely decamped on seeing such a very questionable-looking party as our own, and left his beast to its fate. Our men were in high glee, and promptly proceeded to confiscate the stray camel and lead it on with our own animals, Selámeh merely remarking that they had got a windfall. Not wishing to be a party to such a piece of barefaced robbery, and perhaps to draw down upon ourselves the vengeance of the Arabs to whom the camel belonged, we insisted on their leaving it where it was, which, after some demur, they consented to do. The mountains immediately behind the Ghor es Sáfí are called Jebel el Butsh, those a little higher up by Seil Feifeh are named El Jifneh. Just before reaching camp we saw a wild boar.

On April 16th we stayed in camp to rest, and to get rid of the 'Ammarín Arabs, for as the Ghawárineh seemed more practicable we preferred dismissing the former and going on with them. In the course of the day a Sa'adí Arab came into the camp with a wound in his foot. He had been on a plundering expedition with four others in the mountain, but they had all been taken by the mountaineers and killed. This one took to his heels and escaped with the loss of his 'abba and arms and a slight wound.

The next day some of the Ghawárineh shot us a wild boar, which we bought and cooked. Dabbúr, the sheikh, and his brother Jaiyid, were very civil, and brought us milk and butter *ad libitum*. They had been constantly reproaching the 'Ammarín since their arrival for their treatment of us. At the back of the encampment was a pleasant stream, in which we bathed.

On April 18th we visited the Gasr el Bashâriyeh, a ruined fort at the foot of the mountains behind the camp. The gateway, with a pointed arch, is still in a good state of preservation; it has been plastered inside, and on the plaster are still traces of an Arabic inscription in paint. On the doorway are several tribe marks (called by former travellers astronomical signs). There is an Arab cemetery near the fort dedicated to Sheikh 'Aisá; several of the graves are made on the top of the walls, and the corpses merely covered with stones and bushes. Most of the walls are made of mud, but two are of stone, and have a kind of stone-lined trough at the upper end. The Arabs say that there were formerly water-mills here, and that these were part of the arrangements for bringing the water power to bear.

On the hills above are traces of a town or village, and there is a small building, probably a chapel, nearer the fort. The ruins to the north-west of the fort are of a more recent date than the rest. We next went up the wády called Wády Siddíyeh, in which we found a broad rushing stream (Seil Garáhi) with rushes, tarfahs, and beautifully flowering oleanders growing on its banks; there were also some small fish in the river, and fresh-water crabs. All the 'Ammarín, except Suleimán, had gone off, as we refused to have anything more to do with them. They tried all they could to propitiate us, fearing that we might call them to account hereafter, and promised us safe conduct for the future if we would keep with them, but we could not trust them, and sent them about their business. Here Mr. Drake shot a kite (called in Arabic Hadái), which was promptly cooked and devoured by Sheikh Dabbúr. The head of the Seil Garáhi is about two days' journey up the valley, where there is a fort (Cala'at Garáhi), a station on the Hajj road, the only other one intervening between this and Maán being 'Aneizeh.

On April 19th we left the Ghor es Sáfí about 10 a.m., with a motley *cortége* consisting of five donkeys, a mule, and five horses, besides an Arab woman and child on foot. Passing through the *hísh* (or park) and a large piece of cultivated ground, we came to the shore of the Dead Sea. As the mist still continued, the view was a most dreary and dismal one. The shore consists of soft sand covered with an incrustation of salt and pieces of dry drift wood; here and there the water had remained and formed stagnant pools filled with decayed vegetable matter, and in these the mud beneath the salt incrustation was black and smelt horribly. In about an hour and a half we reached the ruins of N'meirah, the ancient Nimrim, where there is another stream of water and a weli (Sheikh Saláh) held in great estimation by the Ghawárineh Arabs. Keeping still along the desert shore we passed a ruined tower, the ruins of a place named Meraisid, and came in two hours and a half to the Ghor es Sa'ad, where we found an encampment of Mejelliát Arabs from Kerek. They came out to welcome us and suggested black-mail under the euphemistic title of *rafk* (companionship or escort), but our Ghawárineh attendants promptly repressed them, and our own remarks upon the sub-

ject were far from complimentary. A little distance on was a ruined reservoir, Birket Abu K'taineh, and just over the low hills to the east a small rock-hewn chamber, circular in shape, with two niches in the wall, and a recess leading to a window opposite the door. In the recess was a little store-hole, or closet. The walls were covered with modern Arabic grafiti, and many representations of human hands cut in the soft clay of which the chamber is composed. These are probably the work of Arab pilgrims who visit it on the way to Mecca along this road. The Ghawárineh look upon it as a holy place (Abu K'taineh being one of their saints), make pilgrimages to the spot and offer sacrifices there; they say that the Jinns (Genii) cut out this dwelling-place for the saint. A little farther on are some heaps of stones by the sea-shore, called Rujúm el Mowájehát; they are used by the Ghawárineh as altars on which to sacrifice to Nebi Saláh (whose tomb can be seen from this spot) in times when the presence of hostile tribes makes it difficult or impossible to approach the weli itself. After a walk of about eighteen miles we reached the Ghor el Mezárí, and pitched our tent in the midst of an encampment of the Arabs of that place. No sooner were we encamped than the Ghawárineh swarmed round our tent, pressing and crowding upon one another with rabid curiosity, and so completely hemming us in that Ibrahím, our servant, in endeavouring to get near us fell head over heels in the midst of them all. They apologised for their curiosity by saying that they had never seen anybody like us before. Towards evening the mist (which we notice always comes up with a south wind) cleared away and revealed the Dead Sea and its neighbourhood, the colouring of which, when the atmosphere is clear, is simply magnificent.

Early in the morning we started off, accompanied by Felláh Sheikh of the Ghawárineh of the Mezárí, and six or seven men, to visit the Lisán. It is a flat plateau of soft limestone, almost like clay encrusted with salt, and containing here and there bits of soft sulphur. It is lower towards the shore, giving the impression that it was once an island, when the sea-level was higher than it is at present. It is perfectly flat, with the exception of a few small plateaux, rising up like islands upon it here and there. The edges are cut up into deep wádies, which however run only a short distance and then stop abruptly, as the soil is too absorbent to admit of a long flow of water. Crossing the lower piece between the ghor and the general level of the Lisán, we mounted into the plateau, and proceeded for a short distance down a wády called Meráïkh, where we found the ruins of a large tower, built of solid masonry. The hill-side on which it stood had also been strengthened by building a wall of small bricks or brick-shaped stones against it to counteract the crumbly nature of the soil. On the site were some broken columns, and many pieces of glass and pottery were lying on a neighbouring ash-heap, but we could find nothing to indicate its date. Near the same place also we noticed a small reservoir. Making a circuit of the promontory, we came to a slight depression on

the eastern side, in which water collects during the rains, and which consequently shows some signs of fertility; in this depression, which is called 'Aríl, is a fine spreading tree. At the end of the bay we bathed in the Dead Sea; the water is so extremely salt and pungent as to be very painful to the eyes if it is allowed to enter them, but so buoyant that we could float with equal ease upon our backs or breasts, or sit in the water with our heads, hands, and feet out, or act indeed almost as we pleased in it without any fear of sinking. The most disagreeable part of the thing was the impossibility of keeping our feet sufficiently down to swim in the ordinary position. We immensely enjoyed the bathe, although when we were out of the water we became encrusted with a white deposit of salt, and felt our numerous flea-bites very acutely. Returning to camp we found Sheikh Ahmed ibn Tarif, chief of the Beni Hamídeh, waiting for us. He wished us to get off before the Mejelliát came down to worry us, and to camp at his place. To this we consented, and although we were rather tired already with our trip to the Lisán, proceeded to pack up; but it was not without a great deal of noise and bother that we got away. At last, leaving the Ghor, which towards this point is very swampy, we passed the ruined fort on a hill, called Tell 'Abd er Rahím, and crossing the Seil Haditheh, a broad stream of water that might almost be called a river, we began the ascent of the Nagb Jerrah into the hills of Moab. The road, though rather steep, is a broad and good one all the way, and has at various parts been built up with masonry and rocks. All along it are huge cairns of stones, of the origin of which the Arabs knew nothing. Some smaller cairns, about an hour higher up, marked the place where some Arabs of the 'Azázimeh on a predatory incursion had been shot by our friends the Beni Hamídeh. It was not until past dark that we reached the Arab encampment of Sheikh 'Aleyán, where we were to pass the night. The sheikh himself, a palsied old man, received us very civilly, and gave us milk and a dish of rice cooked with butter for our supper, offering us as well a handful of tobacco—the first time we had ever *received* tobacco from an Arab in our lives.

In the morning, as we were packing up, a gazelle suddenly appeared close by the camp, and was immediately followed by one of the dogs, as well as by half the able-bodied men of the tribe. One of them came near it, and knocked it over by throwing his dabbús, or club, and having slaughtered it, the rest brought it in triumph to the camp. It was a very fine animal, and we bought the horns for a few charges of powder. Continuing our ascent we came to the top of the Nagb Jerrah, where were some pools of water, constructed with rude masonry, and called Hafáïr Jerrah. There was still a considerable ascent to make, but after toiling for some time over steep sloping hills, and passing a spring called 'Ain el Joheir, we came to the encampment of Sheikh Ahmed, which was situated on a flat knoll, just beneath the Rás en Weimeh. The scene on thus entering Moab was very pretty, reminding us somewhat of Palestine, though the hills are on a much larger scale, and the butmah-

trees take the place of the olives of Judea. As soon as we arrived we were entertained with coffee, and sat some time in the "shigg," talking with the Arabs, until the tent was pitched. No sooner had we got fairly settled down, than Ahmed brought us two capital dishes, one of rice and butter, and the other of millet and butter, for lunch, and shortly before sunset he again brought a smoking hot dish of boiled lamb, fat and fleshy, and resting in a mess of rice and butter; this, with some hot bread and a dish of boiled and buttered corn, made us a dinner by no means contemptible.

The object of our coming was immediately divined by the Arabs, for we found that the affair at Dhibán had afflicted them with a positive mania for "written stones." Our host offered to conduct us at once to Shihán that we might see, and, if it pleased us, buy a stone which he declared he had found and concealed there, and which the now celebrated Ibn Nuseir had been unable to obtain for the "consuls at Jerusalem." He had, however, a keen eye to profit in the transaction, and declared that we must pay a sum of money down before seeing the stone, because, as he frankly told us, it might be worth nothing, and then we might only give him a trifle for his trouble, which would not answer his purpose. He, moreover, added the following reassuring remark: "If you Franks had come down here twelve months ago, and offered me a pound or two, you might have taken all the stones you chose, the Dhibán one included; but now you have taught us the worth of written stones, and the Arabs are alive to their importance at last." Several times we were told, by men who had actually assisted in breaking the Dhibán stone, and who might therefore be supposed to know what it was like, of other monuments which they declared to be the very counterpart of it. We could not leave such statements unsifted, and the same routine had to be observed time after time—an extravagant bakhshísh, a long walk or ride, occasionally entailing a night passed under the shelter of a rock, with no other food than a piece of dry bread and a skin of water—the result being a stone covered with old tribe marks, natural veins, or at the best a fragmentary Nabathæan inscription.

The morning after our arrival we set off, attended by six guards, to visit "Lot's wife," and although we knew that we should have to camp out on the mountains, took with us nothing but a little flour, and no extra wraps but a dressing-gown apiece. Proceeding down a narrow winding valley with a steep gradient, we came to a stream of water, a *birkeh*, and the ruins of a fort built in very solid masonry. Farther on was a large cave on the right, in which the Arabs took refuge when Ibrahim Pasha came to these parts with his soldiery. Farther on, about three and a-half miles from camp (turning off to the right), we came to an encampment of Arabs, where we lunched on hot bread broken up and soaked in butter, and after paying a trifle for our entertainment, started again on our journey.

Passing along the sides of the steep hills for about three miles, we

came to a plateau 2,100ft. above the Dead Sea. Here is a conical hill of bluish clay, called Telail Abu Fulús (the coin-containing mound), towards which we walked, the Arabs declaring that our road lay that way. On reaching it, however, it was apparent that they had missed the path, and we found ourselves obliged to descend an almost perpendicular cliff of broken sandstone. The view from this was exquisitely beautiful, and the colouring some of the softest and most delicate I have ever seen. A steep and difficult climb brought us to another plateau about 1000ft. above the Dead Sea, on the edge of which was the object of which we were in search—Bint* Sheikh Lot, or "Lot's wife," a tall isolated needle of rock. The story which the Arabs tell is merely a slightly distorted version of the Bible account, with the addition that there were seven cities, and that the Dead Sea, which did not exist before that time, miraculously swallowed them up. The Ghawárineh say that it was a punishment for rejecting the mission of Mohammed, and that Lot, the only believer in the place, was told to go *eastwards* with his wife and family, and forbidden to look behind him. His wife neglected the precaution, and had indeed ridiculed her husband's prophetic warnings before. In retribution for this she was turned into this pillar of rock, which at a distance does bear a curious resemblance to an Arab woman with her child upon her shoulders. The sandstone presents some very fine colouring, red, purple, and violet streaks of very brilliant hue relieving the monotony of the ochre tint of its ground-work. The lower plateaux would seem from the water-worn appearance of the stones to have been former sea-levels. Hastening back, we came about sunset to some water in holes in the rock left by the previous spring rain, and after quenching our thirst thereat, went on until nightfall, when we stayed to rest in a hole in the rock, and sending two of the men to knead some flour at the water above us, baked a piece of bread in a wood fire and lay down to sleep. Having very little covering, and nothing to rest upon but sharp stones, we did not sleep very comfortably; and, as soon as it was light we started off again, and having rested a little while at the stream of water, turned off towards the tents of some Arabs on the right-hand hills and begged a breakfast. Here we were told of a stone in the neighbourhood, the description of which greatly raised our expectations, for the Arabs declared it to be exactly like the Dhibán stone, but bigger. After toiling up a high hill we found the stone in question on the top of the pass—a large flat block of naturally broken stone, with rude figures of *beden*, &c., scratched upon it, exactly like those so common in Sinai. It was very disappointing, but there was nothing for it but to make the best of the matter and our way home. Resisting the hospitality of Fá'úr, one of our men, whose tents we passed on our way, we reached camp about three o'clock, very tired and weary, and were glad to turn in for the night. In the morning, after breakfast, we mounted horses

* *Bint* properly means "daughter," but in Moab it also signifies "wife."

and set off, accompanied by Sheikh Ahmed, on a visit to Shihán, the ancient Sihon. Passing through a number of fields enclosed by ancient walls, and called Hákúrát Huseiní, we came to a ruined village called Sarfat el Mál, where we had been told of the existence of a stone with writing on. This turned out to be nothing more than a broken boulder of black basalt with natural markings. The buildings were not unlike those at Dátráiyeh, the arches being of the same pattern, but all composed of the black basalt above spoken of. We found a millstone of the same in one of the wells, in shape like those discovered at Pompeii. Riding along beside an old road which ran between two walls we passed sundry other ruins, Hammet 'Aneinah and Mejdelain, two forts on the right, Mer'á, a village on the left, and Haimer, a fort east of Shihán, and at last reached the ruins of Shihán itself. They are situated on a round hill which rises out of the flat fertile plateau beginning at Sarfat el Mál. There is little left of the ancient city of Sihon but a few rude forts and dwellings, and a well, or matamore. In the centre there evidently once stood a temple, probably Roman, and some pieces of broken columns lay scattered about. The stones of which we had heard so much from the Arabs turned out to be merely a rude capital with the ordinary Ionic ornament, and a flat broken slab of white stone with a few Arab tribe marks upon it. At Shihán were numerous Arab graves; one recent burial was excessively unpleasant to our olfactory nerves, as the corpse had been only partly covered by a few stones thrown over it. We noticed as a peculiarity of the burials here that two sticks with a rope between were often placed beside the grave, and on this braided locks of hair were hung as offerings. Again disappointed, we turned off to visit El Yehúdiyeh, of which the Arabs have a legend that it is a woman turned into stone for profanely denying the certainty of death. It is merely a black rock, or rather boulder, about 12ft. long, and shaped something like the Bint Lot before described. Passing the ruins of Fugú'a, we ascended a hill beside Wády M'naikherain, and lunched at the tents of some Arabs on a dish of boiled millet and butter, washed down with leben, or sour milk, and returned to camp after a ride of about eighteen miles. Moab is a flat plateau about 3,200ft. above sea-level, the edges being cut into deep valleys and worn into steep sloping hills at angles of forty-five and fifty degrees. Everywhere ruined villages meet the eye; the country is covered with ruined walls that once enclosed corn-fields and gardens, and everything tells of the immense wealth and fertility which it must have once possessed. Even now the land, though badly tended, is rich and prolific, and large plots of young corn and yokes of bullocks ploughing are met with everywhere.

At Shihán we received a visit from Khalíl el M'jellí, sheikh of the Kerek Arabs. While we were in the Ghor the Haweitát Arabs made a raid on him, and stole his horses and mules, to the number of sixteen; he was, consequently, rather hard up, and was now going the round of his friends to pick up what he could towards supplying his

loss. He contemplated bleeding us, but did not succeed. Sheikh M'sellim, one of the chiefs of the Beni Hamídeh, also invited us to a feed at his tents. The accounts of the unsafe state of the road by Shobeck and to the east of Petra, and the raid that had actually taken place during our journey through the 'Arabah, gave us cause for congratulation that we did not leave Wády Músa by the Darb el Hajj, as we had at first intended.

On April 27th we walked to a ruin called Nebi Dâ'údi, or, by some Suleimán ebn Dá'úd. It is a square ruined building, with compartments round the interior, and a large tomb, 26ft. long, in an open courtyard in the centre. The tomb is composed of hewn stones, with an upright one at either end; at the eastern end were numerous offerings, such as beads, buckles, coins, and the like. One of the compartments on the south side had evidently been a mosque, as it contained a regular mihráb, and had a verse of the Corán painted on the plaster of the wall, ornamented with an elaborate arabesque fresco. Here again were numerous offerings, amongst them many camel sticks. It is probably the tomb of some pagan, perhaps Moabitish hero, adopted by the Moslems as a weli. When we came back we had a hearty meal off a kid, which Sheikh Ahmed had given us, and were very glad to get a taste of meat again, having been without for some days.

One morning we had an opportunity of listening to an Arab council f war. Two men came as ambassadors from 'Abd er Rahmán el 'Awar, one of the Felláh chiefs of El Jebál, to seek for peace with the Beni Hamídeh. This fellow is a great scoundrel, and some time before had invited the chief men of the village next his own to an entertainment, and when they were all asleep in his house at night had murdered them in their beds, and thrown the carcasses to the dogs. This year he repeated the performance, and has thus murdered forty men. Of course it was no affair of the Bedawín, but a few days previous to the arrival of the embassy he had attacked a tribe belonging to the Beni Hamídeh and stolen their cattle, taking with them some of the sheep and donkeys belonging to Sheikh Ahmed Ibn Tarîf himself. The latter now demanded either that his beasts should be restored or an equivalent in money paid, and dismissed the messengers with a very summary remark to the effect that if they came near him until the terms were complied with he would murder them then and there. Certainly the Beni Hamídeh were much more quiet and sensible fellows than any others whom we had seen, and Ahmed's demeanour during this rather important discussion was calm, and free from all violent demonstration. When the men had gone he came to the tent and told us they were some of his own people, and were bargaining about a sheep. This was in order not to arouse our apprehensions, as the country is in a very unsafe state, but when he found we had overheard the whole affair, he made no further attempt at concealment.

On the morning of May 1st the wind was blowing a perfect hurricane, and we found all the Arabs moving their tents to the other side of the

hill, and had ourselves to follow their example. The change was for the better, as we had a clearer camping ground and a good view of the Dead Sea in front of our tent.

One night we were awakened by a great noise and shouting; it seemed that some of the S'khúr Arabs were returning from a raid against the 'Azázimeh and Gadeirát Arabs, and had brought with them fifty camels which they had stolen. Our host and his party, hearing that they were passing by his way, turned out in the hopes of catching them and levying a tribute of one or two camels, but failed to overtake them. In the morning a Christian trader from Kerek, a wretched-looking scoundrel, arrived in the camp; he was going a round of the tribes for the purpose of buying butter.

About nine o'clock on the morning of May 5th we got away from the Beni Hamídeh camp, and, crossing the plateau towards Shihán, stayed by appointment at the camp of Sheikh Musellim. Here we sat in the "shigg" some time and drank *leben*, after which we went to our own tent, where Musellim brought us a dish of boiled lamb and millet, and later on another similar dish, followed by a delicious dish of sweet curds.

In the morning, as we were ready to start, about half-past five o'clock, Sheikh Zeben came up and declared that he knew of a stone at Mejdelein close by, and we accordingly rode off to see it. It turned out to be a stone lintel with a rough Greek pattern upon it in relief, covered with red paint, and on the under surface a still rougher vine pattern. Giving Musellim a small bakhshísh, with which he was of course dissatisfied, we at last got off, and, crossing the summit of Jebel Shihán, strolled down the wády on the other side, which we found to be full of rude caves, now used by the Arabs for their winter quarters. This wády is called Wády el Weil. After another long walk across the plateau we came to the pass leading down into Wády Mojib. There was a small ruined fort at the top, and the pass itself was one of the steepest we had yet seen, being about 1,500ft. deep. At the bottom we found a pleasant stream of water, near which we rested during the heat of the day, and gathered some of the delicious fruit of the nebuk-trees which were growing there. We then had a bathe, and went up the valley a little way to look at a wonderful cave said to exist there. We found it to be merely a naturally formed niche in the rock, which is of limestone, very soft and easily detached, but which hardens on exposure to the air, so that the surface is always firm. It was covered with rude figures in red paint, representing camels, &c. (as in the Sinai inscriptions), and a half-obliterated Nabathæan inscription. It is said to be the work of a fairy, *Melicheh*, and to change colour at night, turning from red to green. As the heat was very oppressive, and we were both footsore, we rode up the pass to Kúrah, and, crossing this plateau, reached Dhibán soon after dark, and merely spreading our beds, and making a loaf of bread and some tea, had a frugal meal and turned in for the night.

On May 7th we were up at daybreak, and after breakfasting off the

remains of the last night's bread we looked over the ruins of Dhibán and inspected the remains of the celebrated "Moabitish stone." The village is built upon two hills, the architecture being just like that at Datraiyeh. There is a wall running round the town, and the place where the stone was originally found is just within the gate where the high road comes in. The Arabs had buried it below the soil a few yards from the spot, and when the quarrel ensued between the various tribes respecting it, had kindled a fire and smashed it to atoms with stones. We looked the pieces carefully over, but the written parts were all gone, though there was still some of the smoothed surface remaining, of which we each took a piece for a memorial. One reason which appears to have induced the Arabs to break the stone as soon as any dispute arose concerning it was, that when the "Hajar el 'Abd," a portion of a bas-relief, was taken by M. de Saulcy from Kerek, both Khalíl el Mujellí and Hassan Abu B'reizeh, quarrelled about the price paid, and a war was brought about between the two tribes and many men were slaughtered. In order to avoid the recurrence of any such *contretemps*, the Arabs now, whenever they find a stone likely to be of any value, at once conceal it. Mounting our horses we rode across to Umm Rasás, passing by the way a ruin called Rujeim Selím. Umm Rasás is a large ruined town built on similar arches to those described in other ruins, and containing two churches. It is surrounded by a strong buttressed wall, and is about 400 yards square. Outside the town to the north is a suburb, and farther on in the valley a number of rock-cut reservoirs, a square building, and a tower about 50ft. high, rather neatly ornamented at the top. The inside is filled with large stones which completely block up the staircase. There is a legend that it was built by a Christian chief for his son, in order to protect the latter from the fulfilment of a prophecy which foretold that on his marriage night a wild beast would devour him. He was at last married to a lovely girl, who was brought to him in the tower to avoid the dreaded consequence. The bride, however, turned out to be a Ghúleh (Ghoul), and, assuming the form of a wild beast, devoured him then and there. We found crosses sculptured over the windows of the churches and the tower. After a long and thirsty ride (for the day was an inordinately hot one) we reached the edge of the plateau and began to descend into some of the smaller wádies; in one of these, near a ruin called Khirbet el Ghazáleh, we found a camp of the S'khúr Arabs (singular S'kheri), and had a drink of leben and a bowl of buttered bread with them in the "shigg." From this point we struck Wády el Butmah (so called from the number of terebinth-trees with which it abounds), and keeping along the top of the wády bank descended after about two hours by a steep and difficult pass into Wády Wáleh. Here was a beautiful seil, quite a little river, dashing over the rocky bed and filled with fish (*shemel*, a species of chad). Our men had been told to wait for us at the camp of the Hamaideh in this valley, and as that was some distance down we did not reach it until past nightfall. On our way we passed a curious isolated rock and a ruined mill. Not far

from camp there was a ruined village and bridge. We discovered that the only inscribed stone at Umm Rasás, where we had been led to expect great things, was a rude Nabathæan sepulchral monument, of which a squeeze had been brought to Jerusalem. A copy has already appeared in the *Quarterly Statement*, and I purpose myself giving a corrected copy of the same with a translation and comment.

On May 8th we went down to the seil to bathe, and spent some hours in catching fish, obtaining a good dish for lunch by chasing them about in the shallows and catching them with our hands, or "tickling" them as they lay under the banks. The stream is a very pretty one, flowing over a rugged bed of hard white limestone, and bordered by thickets of flowering oleanders. Here and there it narrows into a deep rushing torrent and again falls in a little dashing waterfall over the stones. In one place we found a place deep and long enough for us to have a very comfortable swim, which we indulged in twice during the day. While we were in the water we were visited by Sheikh Hassan Abu B'raizeh, from Kerek, who was encamped close by and had come to invite us to his tents, making great promises of friendship, and offering us as presents his gun, horse, and pistol. We consented to accept a small kid, as he, too, had some stones to tell us of, but they turned out to be the same which we had ourselves seen at Shihán. The day was very hot, the thermometer standing at 107 in the shade, and the candle which was placed beside us in the tent actually melted away.

The next day we left Wády Wáleh at sunrise, and mounted once more on the plateau, where Fa'úr, our chief guide, took leave of us, as usual, disappointed with the amount of his bakhshísh. We passed on the way Khirbet Libb, ruins to the east; Hareidín, a small ruined tower to the east; Wády Habís, and Zerka Ma'ín, to west. There are two Zerkas in Moab; this one is called Zerka Ma'ín, from the rather extensive ruins of the ancient town of Maon, now called Ma'ín, which are situated on its banks. Another large ruin, called Jedúl, lies a mile or so to east, with a road branching off towards it. Presently we came to Wády 'Ayún ed Dheib, a steep glen, in the centre of which is a ruined village, where Matlag, one of our men, declared that he had found and buried a stone like the Dhibán one. He described it as rather redder in colour, but in shape like the breast of a man, with incised writing on the upper side. It was set (he continued) in a kind of pedestal formed of masonry, covered with stucco. We were just starting for it when we found that some Arabs were encamped near the place, and our men began making excuses and refused to go on, so that we were obliged to return much disappointed, and determined to send Matlag for a squeeze. It turned out to be nothing but a Nabathæan inscription. We now came to the edge of the Moabite plateau, and began to descend on to the slopes above the Ghor, which are called the Belga.* Here we saw several stone circles

* The word is properly written Bel*k*a, but the Bedawín always change the hard *k* into *g*, and I have throughout this report followed the local pronunciation.

of the type familiar to us in the Tíh, and one heap called El Maslúbiyeh. We camped for lunch in Wády el Kenaiseh (at the top of the Belga), where there was a spring and stream of water. At three o'clock we set off again and descended into the Ghor es Seisibán, which we reached about nightfall, and spreading our beds in the open air had a piece of dry bread and a drink of water for dinner and turned in.

Our sojourn in Moab was expensive and unsatisfactory. The Arabs were affected with a mania for written stones, and we were in this way induced to take long and tedious journeys about the country to see stones which they declared to be the very counterpart of the Dhibán inscription, and, thanks to the utter mismanagement in the case of the latter monument, the owners having learned the worth of such antiquities, had them concealed, and demanded a large bakhshísh before they would reveal the hiding-place.

We visited camp after camp, staying with the various sheikhs, passing from tribe to tribe, and living *à la Arabe* in order to gain their confidence, and in this way we succeeded in inspecting every known "written stone" in the country, besides examining and searching ruins for ourselves; but the conclusion has at last forced itself upon us that, *above ground* at least, there does not exist another Moabitish stone.

If a few intelligent and competent men, such as those employed in the Jerusalem excavations, could be taken out to Moab, and certain of the ruins excavated, I think it not improbable that further interesting discoveries might be made, as the Bedawin have at various times undoubtedly found relics of antiquity—gold coins, and even a small idol—when ploughing in the neighbourhood of the ancient cities. Such researches might be made without difficulty if the Arabs were well managed and the expedition possessed large resources; but it must be remembered that the country is only nominally subject to the Turkish Government, and is filled with lawless tribes, jealous of each other and of the intrusion of strangers, and all greedily claiming a property in every stone, written or unwritten, which they think might interest a Frank.

At least a thousand pounds would be required, and with this sum another Moabitish monument might be found, but until such sum is put into an explorer's hand there is little chance of a second being brought to light.

That many treasures do lie buried among the ruins of Moab there can be but little doubt, and the Arabs indeed narrated to us several instances of gold coins and figures having been found by them while ploughing, and sold to jewellers at Nablous, by whom they were probably melted up.

Near Kerek are some ancient remains situated on two hillocks similar to those at Dhibán, to which the following legend attaches:

"Between Kefráz and Kefrúz (the two hillocks in question), are buried 100,000 jars, containing the wealth of Hakmon the Jew."

I think it probable, therefore, that if an expedition to Moab for the purposes of legitimate excavation were organised, some other monuments might be discovered, but I am convinced that a mere visit even of scien-

tific men to the country will be attended with nothing but disappointment and annoyance.

Scarcely was it light the next morning when we were again on the march, and starting without any breakfast, made for the Jordan, passing through a Hish called Tell Rám, and by Kala't el Húl, some ruins to the north. The Ghor to the north is called Nimrín. About ten o'clock we reached the Jordan, which is hidden in the midst of a forest of large tarfah and other trees, some of the former being nearly 30ft. in height. The river is here very rapid and rather muddy, flowing through high banks of marl. Only a little piece of it can be seen at a time, as it soon loses itself in a thick jungle of canes and rushes. We crossed by a ferry boat, which slides along a guide-rope, and while the beasts were being taken across we had a bathe in the holy river, and very refreshing it was. In trying to take the camels across in the boat, one (luckily not one of ours) fell overboard, and was only got out with great difficulty, as the current is very strong, and carries anything down with astonishing rapidity. After a cup of coffee in the *'Arish*, or straw hut, the abode of the ferrymen, we remounted our horses, rode on to Jericho, and our desert wanderings were at an end.

In a future number of the *Quarterly Statement* I hope to give an account of my subsequent work in Jerusalem, Palestine, and Syria, together with copies and translations of the numerous inscriptions which I have found in the Haram es Sherif and elsewhere. To this I purpose adding a complete Mohammedan account of the Holy City, drawn from Arabic manuscripts now in my hands.

E. H. PALMER.

[In order that the extent and value of Mr. Palmer's researches may be better understood, we reprint from the *Quarterly Statement* No. IV. the following paper, which embodies all the information that was attainable before he visited the country.]

THE DESERT OF THE TÎH.

A line drawn from the ancient port of Gaza, on the Mediterranean, through the wells called Bir-es-seba, the site of Beersheba, to the entrance of Wády el Jeib, at the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, cuts off the northern part of the Holy Land, where towns and villages are found, from the southern part, which is almost wholly devoid of such habitations.

The latter section is naturally divisible into three parts, viz., 1, Sinai; 2, the Desert of Et Tîh, the scene of the Wanderings of the Children of Israel; 3, the Negeb, or "south country" of the Bible, where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob dwelt.

The attention which it is well known has recently been paid with so much success to the exploration and partial survey of Sinai, is now being fol-

lowed up by an examination, by Mr. Palmer and Mr. Drake, of the Desert of Et Tíh and the Negeb, with a view to the further elucidation of the scenes in which the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob dwelt, and of the desert where the children of Israel spent forty years in consequence of their revolt at Kadesh. The tract in question is in some parts entirely unknown, and its exploration has now become more than ever a desideratum in the various branches of science.

The Desert of Et Tíh is a limestone plateau of irregular surface, having the Peninsula of Sinai on the south, with the Mediterranean Sea and the Promised Land on the north. Just as Sinai projects wedge-shaped into the Red Sea between the gulfs of Suez and Akaba, so does the Tíh advance with steep escarpments into the peninsula. On one side the edge of the plateau runs nearly parallel with the Gulf of Suez, and skirting the isthmus, not far eastward of the new ship canal, is gradually lost in the desert plain which borders the Mediterrancan Sea.

On the other side in like manner the edge of the plateau faces the Gulf of 'Akabah, and continues in the same direction to skirt the Wády el 'Arabah, which separates the gulf from the Dead Sea and the Jordan valley. On this side the desert plateau is terminated on the north by the hilly country which, extending through the whole length of the Promised Land, commences about 50 miles south of the Mediterranean Sea. It forms a well-defined limit of the desert, and is described by Dr. Robinson as rising like a wall from the desert plain, with the remarkable cone of Jebel 'Arâif on the west, and the cliff of El Mukrah on the east.

This hilly region, as far as Beersheba, includes the Negeb, or "South land" of the Bible, with the upland pastures of Gerar, where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob fed their flocks, and held personal intercourse with the Almighty. It was afterwards inhabited by the Amalekites, in later times by the Idumeans, and now by the Azázimeh, the Saidiyeh, and the Dhullâm Arabs. The Azázimeh country is the most southerly, and quite unknown. Near the cliff Mukrah, an ancient road is supposed to have passed between Gaza and the Gulf of 'Akabah, with a branch to Hebron. Here, too, at its base, on the verge of Paran or the Tíh, and of Zin or the 'Arabah, some critics place Kadesh, one of the most hotly contested sites in Biblical investigation, and the settlement of which is much to be desired. The other positions of most importance in the controversy, are Dr. Robinson's Ain el Weibeh, in the 'Arabah; and Mr. Rowland's Ain el Kudeirah, or Kudes, among the valleys on the west.

Just as Sinai projects into the Red Sea, and as the Tíh projects into Sinai, so does the Negeb advance into the Tíh. For on the west the desert skirts the hill country northwards from Jebel 'Arâif up to Beersheba and Gaza, where the Wády Suny serves for a boundary, dividing the barren waste from the Shefelah, or fertile plain of Philistia. On the east the plateau of the Tíh runs up beyond the cliff of El Mukrah, towards the Dead Sea, in the form of a narrow terrace, between the eastern base of the hill country and the great Wády el 'Arabah.

In proceeding northwards from the Gulf of 'Akabah, the traveller ascends

a succession of terraces, the first of which is the Tîh itself, and the next is the hill country of the Azázimeh. This is succeeded by a third, which rises precipitously from the second terrace up a vast inclined plane of a thousand feet in height, and very steep. It is traversed by the Nukb, or pass of Es Sufâ, and also nearer the Dead Sea by the pass of Ez Zuweirah, both well described by Dr. Robinson. On this third terrace are the ruins of Thamara (Kurnub), Aroer (Arara), and Arad. It is inhabited by Dhullâm and Saidiyeh Arabs. Its western side is formed by Jebel Rakmah, behind which Dr. Stewart saw from Beersheba the top of another range, called Ras Tareibeh, but neither of these ranges have been explored. A valley of considerable extent, called Wády Marreh, is said to cross the high land at the foot of the third terrace, connecting Wády el Ain on the west with Wády Fikreh on the east. It is at the western end of these valleys that Mr. Rowland places Kadesh. In the same neighbourhood are said to be the ruins of Eboda; and Jebel Madherah, which rises in a conical form out of Wády Marreh, is regarded by some as Mount Hor.

The distance from Hebron or Gaza to the cliff of El Mukrah, the southern extremity of the hill country, is about 70 geographical miles in direct lines. The width of the hill country is about 30 geographical miles. Up to the present time it has only been crossed by travellers hurrying on to Hebron, Petra, or Sinai. It is with the view of attracting more than a passing glance to this home of the Patriarchs, and threshold of the Promised Land, as well as to define its relations to the Desert of Et Tîh, that these brief remarks have been made. Until it is exhaustively studied, the situation of Kadesh must remain in doubt, and that is the key to the movements of the Israelites after they departed from Sinai. It was their third resting-place beyond Sinai. They came to Kadesh, unto the mountain of the Amorites, in the wilderness of Paran, and near to the wilderness of Zin, eleven days' journey from Horeb. There the people remained while the spies "ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron," searching the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob. There Miriam died. There Moses smote the rock and the water came out abundantly, but, sinning in the act, he was denied admission into the Promised Land. From thence, after sojourning forty years in the wilderness, the Israelites departed on their way to Canaan, and came to Mount Hor, where Aaron died.

Turning now to the Tîh itself, the first point that invites examination on approaching it from Sinai is the nature of its southern limit, and the passes which cross it. Beyond the names of Jebel er Rahah, Jebel et Tîh, Jebel Ojmeh, and Jebel Dhelel, as divisions of the range, together with certain prominent points seen at a distance, as Tas et Sudr and Jebel Wardan, as well as the passes of Er Rakineh, Wursah, and Mureikhy, there is but little to be found that deserves the name of accurate description or delineation. The south-eastern edge is perhaps worse defined than the south-western; indeed, there is scarcely anything definite known about the former.

The surface of the plateau itself, although traversed by the route of the Egyptian caravan to Mecca, and often crossed by travellers, has never been systematically explored. It is for the most part drained by the Wády el Arish into the Mediterranean, and by the Wády el Jeib into the Dead Sea. But although many branches of those great watercourses are delineated and named on such a map as Robinson's, yet nobody has yet attempted to trace any one of them throughout, and the entire outline will certainly be found very inaccurate. Still more imperfect is the orography of the plateau. It is known to be diversified by various elevated groups and ranges, but only passing glances have been bestowed upon them. Russegger, in 1838, threw light upon the subject by his observations for general elevation and geology, but no one has yet attempted to deal with it in detail.

Perhaps the most interesting inquiry about this plateau, in a Biblical point of view, is as to its capacity for sustaining a considerable population under such conditions as it now presents, and under such other conditions as may appear to have existed in former times. Robinson's rapid journey across the eastern corner of the plateau enabled him to ascertain the names of the tribes now inhabiting the entire plateau, viz., the Haiwât, the Tiyahah, and the Terâbin. The Terâbin appear to be of the chief importance, and to be very rich in flocks and herds. They inhabit the western side of the plateau from Jebel er Rahah to Gaza, and their head-quarters are said to be near Tâset Sudr. The Tiyahah occupy the centre in two divisions, and are in alliance with the Terâbin. The Haiwât inhabit the eastern part. Besides this meagre information, very little is known of these tribes.

The examination of the Tíh, or Wilderness of the Wanderings, including, it is to be hoped, the highlands of the Azázimeh, Saidiyeh, and Dhullâm, by Mr. E. H. Palmer and Mr. C. F. Tyrwhitt Drake, cannot fail to throw much new light on this interesting region. The familiarity of the former with the Arabic tongue, and the experience of the latter as a naturalist, are excellent qualifications for the work. Mr. Palmer will, at all events, give us a full account of the people, their history, numbers, organisation, manners, customs, and traditions. Through these inquiries, some light may perhaps be thrown upon the Israelite stations in Numbers xxxiii. It would have been satisfactory to have found an experienced surveyor* among the party, but this deficiency may be counterbalanced by a systematic examination of the ground, coupled with such an itinerary as Dr. Robinson supplies in his "Biblical Researches."

T. S.

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* A reference to the map will show that Messrs. Palmer and Drake were fully equal to the task of making a route survey of more than usual exactness.

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MAP OF MOAB EMBODYING THE INVESTIGATIONS OF CAPT. WARREN R.E. AND E.H PALMER ESQ.

PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND.

Ham ?
Ar. (Rabbath) Moab ?
Rabba
Kir Haraseth ?
Kir of Moab? Kerak
Tophel
Et Tufileh
Bozrah (of Edom)
El Buseireh
Ras el Garaia
Seil Garáhi
Wady Sidd'reh
Jebel el Tarfiyeh
Jebel el Hadîtheh
Jebel el Ahsy
Jebel el Mutfneh
Ain el Jarûd
Kureithelah
Ain el Jeheir
Ain el Beida
Ain Arûs
Ascent of Akrabbim
Pt. Costigan
Pt. Molyneux
Tell Abd er Rahim
El Mezâr
Birket el Etaineh
Rujûm el Mowâjehah
Mersit
Orak
Es Sâfieh
Kasr el Bâshaweh
Khurbet Kumrân
Ain Feshkhah
Ain Jidy
Ain Terâbeh
Ain Hasb
Wady Dhalal
Wady Hasasah
Wady Fikreh
Wady Mûsa
Wady Ghuweir
Wady Ghuweir el Kibly
Wady Ghuweir el Bahry
Wady Ghuweir el Shemaly
Wady Ghuweir el Wusty
Wady Ghuweir el Sherky
Wady Ghuweir el Gharby
Wady Ghuweir el Janûby
Wady Ghuweir el Shemâly
Wady Ghuweir el Kibly
Wady Ghuweir el Bahry